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A PARAPHRASE ON THE CANTICLES, OR, *SONG of SOLOMON.*

By the late LEARNED, *and Pious* PROTESTANT,

THOMAS AGER.

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ALthough many profane persons, as much as in them lay, have debased the Authority *of the* Song of Solomon, *and not only excluded it from being* Canonical, *but ranked it amongst those* profane *Writings, which Heathen Poets were too much guilty of, as if the wisest of Kings*

had meant nothing elſe by this but to ſerenade his Miſtreſs; yet certainly, thoſe that have a more deep Judgment, and pious Conſideration, look upon it as the moſt exact piece of Poetry (next to the Biblia bibliorum; as the Pſalms are particularly called) that ever came forth into the World, and it's being received as Canonical for ſo many Hundred of years, commented on by ſo many Worthy and Famous Men, the ſeveral Parts and Members being ſo often treated on in Pulpits, muſt needs be a great Argument that the Subject was ſomething more than ordinary. Had it been nothing elſe but a wanton Poem, Poſterity would never have ſo much admired it, learned and curious Judgments never have Compoſed ſo many Paraphraſes upon it. A Song of Love indeed it is, but of ſo great, ſo good, ſo glorious a Love, as is reci-

procal,

procal between Christ, and his Spouse the Church; wonderful, *and* passing the Love of Women. *But I suppose, the* intricacy *and* difficulty *of understanding it, has been no small reason why some persons, either out of* lazineſs, *or* impiety, *have so much disrespected it; yet lest the Poyson should spread it self any farther, in these following Sheets is laid down a sufficient discovery of the whole Mystery; every* Verse, *nay, almost every* Word, *being dissected and laid open in all their Significations proper and figurative, and delineated so to the Life, that he that runs may read, in a stile as* humble *as the Author, as* pious *and* passionate *as the Subject of the Book, and with all possible Care and Industry that* Human Learning, *sanctified by the especial* Grace *of God, could shew or endeavour. And certainly, nothing can*

more need a Commentary, than that which is altogether a Parable, a form of ſpeaking that Chriſt himſelf ſo much delighted in, and ſometimes condeſcended to interpret, and the Doctrine of it being ſo uſeful and comfortable to to Mankind. The Author of this enſuing Treatiſe, as his Learning and Piety, were very eminent, ſo his Modeſty was exemplary, in ſo much that in all his life time he could not be induced by the intreaty and importunity of his Friends to Publiſh it; yet leaſt ſo precious a Jewel ſhould lye in darkneſs, firſt, for the good of Souls and benefit of Human kind; and next, to perpetuate the Memory of this good and pious Man; I have, with the advice of his Friends and Relations, thought fit to make known to the World the knowledge and goodneſs of the Author by the ſufficiency of the Work.

Not

Not at all doubting (Chriſtian Reader) but that it will be acceptable to all pious and devout Spirits, eſpecially at this time when the Church of God is under Afflictions, and the Enemies thereof are continually undermining and diſturbing the Peace of it. Yet (God be praiſed) though ſhe be Black, *under Sorrows and Temptations, yet ſhe is* Comely, *and the* Knot of Love *between Chriſt and his Spouſe no mortal Hand will be able to untie; which is, and ought to be, a* Comfort *to all Chriſtians. God give thee Grace to make a* right uſe *of the things herein contained, and it ſhall be the greateſt* ſatisfaction *that can happen to,*

Thine in the Lord,

J. H.

AN ENTRANCE

Into the most Excellent

SONG of SONGS,

WHICH IS

SOLOMONS.

CONcerning the time when *SOLOMON* wrote this Book, whether before his Fall, or after his Repentance, it skills not much to know, neither will any wise Man much contend about it, as being a thing tending to Strife and Debate, rather than to any godly Edifying in the knowledge of the Truth. And to speak much for the Authority of it, seeing it hath been received by the Church of God for so many Hundred years past, both before Christ's coming, and since, and kept (as it were) in the Ark and Sanctuary of God, with the rest of the holy Scri-

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Scripture, when all the reſt of his Songs were caſt aſide, may ſeem to be ridiculous; yet becauſe that ſome in former times have endeavoured to blemiſh it, counting it but a wanton Toy or Ballad about the geſtures of Lovers; it may not be amiſs to ſpeak a few words briefly, in Anſwer to their Objections.

Firſt then let it be conſidered, that the matter herein contained muſt either pertain to *Solomon*: and ſome Queen of his; or elſe to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and his Queen. Not to *Solomon*; for the King that is here ſpoken of is ſet out as one keeping Sheep, as in *Chap.* 1. which was not a thing proper for *Solomon*'s Royalty. And alſo to be without, ſhut from his Wife, as in *Chap.* 5. until the Dew fell upon his head; which agreeth not to *Solomon*'s Princely State. For what Queen of his would offer him ſo much diſgrace?

And for what is ſaid of the Bride in this Song, can never agree to any Queen of *Solomon*'s; for it is ſaid, that ſhe was without ſpot, and that her Bridegroom was gone, ſhe had loſt him, and that ſhe was fain to ſeek him up and down the City, and that ſhe was taken of the Watchmen and beaten: And who durſt do this to any Queen of *Solomon*'s? Therefore ſeeing it cannot agree to *Solomon*, nor to any Queen of his; it can agree to none but the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and his glorious Bride, which is the Church.

But

But it is objected, that the Song ſpeaketh wantonly of the geſtures of Lovers, and therefore they diſdain it, and account it not Canonical. *Object.* 1.

For Anſwer: So the 45*th* Pſalm, wherein the ſame matter is handled, that is handled in this Book, may as well be accounted not Canonical; the whole Pſalm being but an Abridgment of the matter herein contained. They that will take exceptions againſt this Book, becauſe Chriſt expreſſeth himſelf after the manner of a Lover, may as well except againſt that Scripture, where the Lord ſays, *Behold I come as a Thief.* Now as Chriſt compares himſelf to a Thief, not becauſe he dealeth unrighteouſly, but to ſhew the ſuddenneſs of his coming: So he alſo compares himſelf to a Lover, not becauſe he delighteth in wanton geſtures, but becauſe the Love between Man and Wife, is a worthy and moſt excellent repreſentation of the Love between Chriſt and his Church. *Anſw.*

But they Object farther, that the Name of God is not at all uſed in this Song. *Object.* 2.

This proves nothing: For it doth not follow, that becauſe the Name of God is often uſed in great Volums, that therefore it muſt be uſed in every Song. *David* made an excellent Funeral Song at the burial of *Saul*, and yet the Name of God is not mentioned in it, and ſhall it not therefore be Canonical? If this Argument were good, then many Chapters in the Bible muſt be accounted not Canonical, for want of the Name of God being uſed in them. *Anſw.* 2 *Sam.* 1.

Again

Object. 3. Again they ſay, that there is nothing expreſſed of this Song in any of the Writings of the New Teſtament.

Anſw. So there are divers Books in the Old Teſtament that are not mentioned in the New beſides this; neither is all that Chriſt himſelf ſpake, ſet down or alleaged in the New Teſtament.

Now then it muſt follow, that if this Book muſt be rejected, becauſe none of it is expreſſed in the Writings of the New Teſtament; then all other Books in the Old Teſtament, that are not ſet down in part in the New, muſt be accounted not Canonical. And alſo, that whatſoever Chriſt ſpake and alleaged, that was not written, muſt be accounted not to be agreeable to the Writings of the New Teſtament. All that Chriſt ſpake was not written, but only the Abridgment of things. And although the ſentences of this Song are not ſet down in the New Teſtament, yet the Doctrine herein contained, is therein expreſſed.

Therefore abiding by the Authority of it, it being a matter from Heaven, let us bring Faith along in reading of the Ditty, that our Hearts may be raviſhed with the Spiritual excellency herein contained. And ſo I come to the Title.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

VERSE I.

The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's.

THE Holy Ghoſt giveth this Title to the Book to draw our Hearts and Affections unto it, that being throughly affected with the Title of it, we might learn the more perfectly to ſing it.

Two things here are commended in the Title; Firſt, the Compariſon between this and other Songs; Secondly, the Author of it.

The Compariſon is in theſe words, *A Song of Songs.*

The Author of it in theſe words, *Which is Solomon's.* Deut. 10. Rev. 19.

Some ſay, it is ſaid to be a *Song of Songs*, becauſe it was the manner of the *Hebrews*, in extolling or abaſing of things, to double their Words; as when they ſay, *The God of Gods*, it is, God above all Gods. And, *The Lord of Lords*, and *King of Kings*; it ſignifies an excellency above all Lords, and an Authority above all Kings. And ſo alſo in abaſing of things, as when *Noah* curſeth *Cham*, *A Servant of Servants ſhalt thou be*; that is, a moſt vile Servant.

But

But I ſuppoſe there is ſomething more to be conſidered in the words: For it muſt be noted, that *Pſalms* and *Songs* are Arguments of joy and gladneſs; and ſinging is a token of joy and deliverance, out of ſome great Affliction and Miſery. When *Deborah* and *Barack* had gotten the victory over King *Jabin*, King of *Canaan*, they ſung a Song unto the Lord. And when the Lord ſaved *Moſes*, and the Children of *Iſrael*, out of the hands of the *Egyptians*, they alſo ſung a Song. And ſo it was alſo when *David* returned from the ſlaughter of the *Philiſtines*; the Women came out of all the Cities of *Iſrael*, ſinging and dancing with Tabrets of joy, and Inſtruments of Muſic.

Now in that the Holy Ghoſt calleth this Book a Song, he ſheweth that there is matter of great joy in it. And ſeeing it is a *Song of Songs*, it far ſurpaſſeth all other Songs that *Solomon* made; as alſo all other Songs in holy Scripture: ſo that no Song can be match'd with it.

For as to the matter of it, and thing it handleth, it is the Scriptural Communion between Chriſt and his Church, when ſhe is in the loweſt and ſaddeſt condition, by reaſon of her Sin and Miſery; even then this Song ſetteth out unto her the Love and tender Compaſſion of Chriſt her Bridegroom.

And as for the manner of ſetting of it forth, it is in a Dialogue or borrowed Speech, taken from Lovers that are betrothed together in the Marriage knot, wherein the Bridegroom and the

the Bride declare their Affections one to another with great rejoycing; the Bridegroom praiſing and commending his Bride, in that in her miſery ſhe looked upon him; and the Bride her Bridegroom, in that he ſheweth pity and compaſſion upon her. So that this Song goeth beyond all other Songs, in regard of the ſubject Matter of it, and thing it handleth; the very burden of it being to inſtruct us in this, *That Chriſt is ours, and we are his, when Fleſh and Reaſon ſaith the contrary.*

—— *which is* Solomon's.

The next commendation of the Song is from the Author, which is *Solomon.*

Solomon was a Man beſotted in his Life, and ſtained with many foul blemiſhes, was not ſo upright in Heart as *David* his Father, being drawn away by his Wives to the horrible Sin of Idolatry; yet the Lord paſſed by his great and foul ſtains, and made choice of *Solomon* to be the Pen-man of his holy Spirit, and an Inſtrument where his Glory ſhould ſhine. The Lord did not caſt off *Solomon* for his ſtains and blemiſhes, but had an Eye ſtill to that good which was in him, whereby he would make him a worthy Inſtrument to ſet forth his Praiſe. How much the practice of Men differs from this Example of God, is eaſie to be ſeen, who will preſently caſt off all that is good in a Man, if he be but any way ſtained or polluted in his life, 1 *Kin.* 11. 4.

if

if it be a Man of ever ſo excellent Parts and Gifts, able to ſet forth Heavenly myſteries, and do good to the Church of God; yet if he be but any way blemiſhed or defamed, they preſently ſet him aſide as altogether uſeleſs, and make no more account of him, than of a broken Pitcher. The Lord did not do this when he ſaw *Solomon* in his filthineſs, but had an Eye to that good which was in him, which made him uſeful for the good of his Church.

If God ſhould have followed the Example of Men, how ſhould this excellent *Song of Songs* have been had? Or how ſhould the Epiſtles of *Paul* have been had, if *Paul* had been wholly ſet aſide for his perſecuting the Church? Theſe make themſelves more pure than their Maker; elſe they would not go about to teach the Lord what Inſtruments to chuſe, to ſet forth his Glory by. They cannot be content that the Lord ſhall chuſe ſuch Inſtruments as beſt pleaſe him, but muſt needs have ſuch as beſt pleaſe them, or none at all. Like mad Men, that will rather ſtarve for hunger, than receive any Food, unleſs it be preſented in a ſilver Diſh; and dye for Thirſt, if you bring them not Drink in a golden Goblet. All Men therefore muſt humble themſelves, muſt ſtoop, and give Honour and Glory to the Lord; and ſuffer him to make choice of ſuch Inſtruments as beſt pleaſe himſelf to make his Glory ſhine, and to raiſe up his Church with Divine Contemplations. For *Solomon*, although he was unworthy and unfit

to

to be choſen for ſuch an Inſtrument, by reaſon of his foul ſtains; yet in regard of his wonderful Wiſdom, and great Reach, that the Lord had given him, whereby he was able to borrow Speeches from the nature of Earthly things; to ſet forth the Lord's mind in Heavenly things, he was a Man excellently fitted.

For God gave *Solomon* Wiſdom, and largeneſs of Heart, above all Men, his Wiſdom excelled all the Children of the Eaſt; for he was wiſer than *Ethan*, *Heman*, *Calcol*, and *Darda*. And he ſpake of Trees from the Cedar in *Lebanon*, to the Hyſop that groweth out of the Wall. He was able alſo to ſhew the nature of Fowls, and of Fiſhes. There was none like *Solomon* before him, neither after him ſhall there ariſe any like him. *Solomon* was alſo a Figure of Chriſt, in regard of his Wiſdom, Kingdom, and Glory, and alſo being a Man of reſt; for ſo the Lord ſaid of him, Solomon *ſhall be his Name, for I will give Peace to* Iſrael *in his days*.

Now Chriſt is our Peace, who is alſo called *Solomon*.

The Pen-man therefore of this Book being the wiſeſt of all the Prophets, and Chriſt, whom it concerneth, being the very Wiſdom of the Father, and greater than *Solomon*, therefore is this Song commended unto us by the holy Ghoſt, in the higheſt degree of Excellency.

Seeing therefore it is a Song, we muſt learn with all skilfulneſs to ſing it; and ſeeing ſinging

is an argument of joy, we must look for nothing in this Song, but matter of exceeding joy: So that when we are in the lowest condition, by reason of Sin and the Cross, yet then the understanding of this Song will raise us up beyond our selves. For it is not only a Song, but the Song of all Songs, composed by *Solomon*, a Person wiser than all Persons, who figureth out Christ unto us, who is the very Wisdom of the Father, and therefore greater than *Solomon:* And his carriage to be most gentle and loving to us, when we are in the deepest misery, and greatest extremity.

Therefore we must endeavour to learn the Tune and Time of this Heavenly Song, and it will fill our Hearts with joy and gladness.

Verse II.

Let him kiss me ——

WE must understand, that the chief part of this Song is drawn from the similitude of Lovers espoused in Marriage; or else those that have fully finished the Marriage knot. And *Solomon* being moved by the Holy Ghost, made choice of this Similitude above all other things, to set forth the most excellent Mystery between Christ and his Church, no resemblance being greater to manifest the same; not only in regard

regard of the oneneſs that cometh by Marriage, and alſo the firmneſs of the Bond (between Man and Wife) that cannot be broken; but alſo in regard of the Iſſue and Poſterity that comes by Marriage; for even as by reaſon of Marriage, many Children are born into the World, ſo by reaſon of the Soul's uniting unto Chriſt, are many Children brought to Life and Immortality. *Rom. 7.*

The Church is here repreſented to come in a pang of Love, but what Church? *Queſt.*

Not the Church of the *Jews* only, but alſo the Church of the *Gentiles*: For the Church is to be conſidered, either generally, or diſtinctly; either as the Church of the *Jews* and *Gentiles* united into one Body, or elſe the Church of the *Jews* apart, before Chriſt's Incarnation. *Anſw.*

Now as the Church diſtinctly conſidered, deſired after Chriſt that was then to come; ſo the Church generally conſidered, deſireth after Chriſt that is come. Therefore the Church expreſſing her ſelf here by the deſire of a Lover, *Let him kiſs me*; it ſheweth the deſire of the Bride in all Ages of the World.

But why doth the Bride deſire to be kiſſed? *Queſt.*

Kiſſing amongſt Men is a ſign of favour and reconciliation. *David* kiſſed *Abſalom*, and thereby ſhewed, that he was reconciled unto him. *Moſes* and *Aaron* kiſſed each other when they met, as a token of Friendſhip. And when *Laban* departed from *Jacob*, in a token that all ſtrife was ended between them, he kiſſed his Sons, *Anſw.* *2 Sam. 14. 33.* *Gen. 31. 55.*

Sons, and his Daughters, and ſo departed. So that the Church deſiring to be kiſſed, deſireth ſhe may be aſſured by his word of his Love and Reconciliation to her. Now there is a twofold kiſſing mentioned in Scripture; there is a kiſſing on Chriſt's part, and a kiſſing on the Bride's part. Chriſt kiſſeth the Bride, when he aſſureth her by his word that he is reconciled to her, and in Love with her Perſon, although ſhe be a moſt miſerable Sinner. The Bride kiſſeth Chriſt, when ſhe by Faith is reconciled to him, in believing that Chriſt is in Love with her Perſon.

Chriſt offereth the kiſs firſt, in theſe words, *I have loved thee with an everlaſting Love.* The Bride again meeteth him with the kiſs, as ſoon as ever ſhe perceiveth, and is drawn to believe, that her very Perſon is intended in theſe words, *This is the firſt kiſs of Chriſt, which begetteth Faith, and all Heavenly Qualities within us.* There are alſo other kiſſes that follow where the firſt is imbraced, when he loveth our Obe-
Heb. 11. 5. dience, although imperfect, becauſe we pleaſe him by Faith; but this is his antecedent kiſs, which reſpecteth not the Work, but the Perſon, a moſt miſerable Sinner; and this we ought to believe. And in this ſence it is ſaid,
Pſal. 2. 12. *Kiſs the Son leſt he be angry*, that is, ſee that thou thankfully imbrace the firſt kiſs, which aſſureth thee of the acceptance of thy ſinful Perſon, before thy works are regarded, which truth of God worketh in thee Faith,

and

and Love to God, and all good works. In this ſence alſo it is ſaid, *Salute ye one another with an holy kiſs*, and, *Greet ye one another with an holy kiſs*; by which holy Kiſs is meant the Adminiſtring on Chriſt's part, and the embracing on our part the firſt kiſs. And by greeting and ſaluting one another, is ſet forth the higheſt degree of Love among the Brethren, which is a mutual forwardneſs in drawing each other by the Goſpel to receive the firſt kiſs; therefore the Bride ſaith here, *Let him kiſs me*, let him aſſure me in this one point that my Perſon is in his Favour; which is the firſt ground and beginning of our Faith in Chriſt. 2 *Cor.* 13. 12. 1 *Theſ.* 5. 26.

But why doth the Bride here deſire to be kiſſed with more kiſſes beſides the firſt kiſs? *Queſt.*

Becauſe by the firſt kiſs ſhe is ſo wonderfully taken up with the Love of her Beloved, that ſhe cannot be at reſt without him, but deſireth more and more after him. And it ſheweth us alſo the true nature and uſe of Faith, which is, not to deſpair, nor be diſmayed, under the feeling of the greateſt Sins and Calamities; but then when it is at the worſt, as a Remedy againſt all, it teacheth us to humble our ſelves, and to deſire the kiſſes of our Beloved. *Anſw.*

And ſhe addeth farther,

— *with the kiſſes of his Mouth* —

Becauſe all the Comforts that ſhe findeth in the day of Adverſity, do proceed from the Mouth

of Christ her Beloved. For when Satan rageth, the Law threatneth, and her Conscience accuseth, yet then the Mouth of her Beloved is most sweet and Lovely. His Lips are like Lillies dropping sweet smelling Myrrhe The
Prov. 27. 6. kisses of an Enemy are deceitful, therefore she
Cant. 5. 16. desireth her Friend. The Law cannot comfort her in the day of distress, therefore she desireth after her Lord. She forsaketh the Servant, and desireth to be kissed with the kisses of Christ's mouth. Now the reason why she desireth the kisses of Christ above all others, is set down in the next words.

—— *For thy Love is better than Wine.*

In which words, she setteth out the excellency of his Love far beyond all his Gifts. Wine is an excellent gift of God, having many excel-
1 *Tim.* 5. lent Properties in it; it helpeth the infirmity of Man's Body; it is delightful to the Eye; pleasant to the Taste; but above all this, the Psal-
Psal. 104. 15. mist saith, *It maketh glad the Heart of Man.* These things she denieth not, but that they are very delightful; but yet she esteemeth them as nothing, in comparison of his Love. Wine also was in much esteem at Marriages, as we see by the Wedding Christ was at, when he turned Water into Wine; yet notwithstanding all these, the Bride is more inflamed with the Love of his Person, than with the Love of Wine;

Wine; and the reaſon ſhe giveth is, becauſe his Love is better than Wine.

Which ſheweth us the right way how to have a light eſteem of all things under the Sun, which is, to faſten our Eyes upon ſomething that is better. And alſo, that when we are in the greateſt Miſery, by reaſon of Sin and the Croſs, it ſheweth us what to do, even then to deſire the apprehenſion of Chriſt's Love; and to aſſure our ſelves by Faith, that he ſpeaketh good and comfortable words unto us, and not as the Law and our own evil Conſciences doth; theſe things thou haſt done, and therefore thy Miſery is juſt. I ſay, Chriſt doth not thus ſpeak to the humbled Soul, but ceaſeth then from Rigour, parteth with his Right, and ſpeaketh the words of Grace and Conſolation to us. Therefore muſt we embrace his Heavenly kiſs with thankful Hearts, and then ſhall we find by experience that to be true which the Bride here ſingeth, *Thy Love is better than Wine.*

VERSE III.

Becauſe of the ſavour of thine Ointments——

HEre it is farther ſhewed by the holy Ghoſt, why the Bride doth ſo much eſteem of his Love, and why her Affection is ſo much drawn to him; it is becauſe of the ſavour of

his Ointments; his Person is most excellent and sweet; for being anointed with the Godhead, all his Actions became meritorious for her in the sight of the Father.

For it must be noted, that when the nature of Man was taken by the Godhead in Unity of Person, it was filled with notable and excellent Graces; both with all created and uncreated Perfections, with Wisdom in the Understanding, Holiness in the Will, Purity in the Affections, in all points, whereby the Body it self became a worthy Instrument, for the great Work of Man's Redemption. And these the Bride calleth his Ointments, by which he became a Person, whose sacrifice was a sweet smelling savour, not only in the sight of God; but also in the Consciences of all the Elect.

Exod. 20. 30. And this anointing of Christ was shadowed in the Law, when God did appoint that there should be an anointing Oyl made of the Oyl of Olives, and other notable Perfumes, for the anointing of *Aaron* and his Sons, and the Vessels of the Sanctuary; which holy Oyl was to be as a Sacrament of that most excellent sweetness that should be found in Christ, the high Priest of his Church. That even as *Aaron* and his Sons, being anointed therewith, were made to smell sweet in the Nostrils of the People; so the Godhead did perfume the Humanity of Christ, with such most excellent sweetness, whereby the smell of his Actions did make a most pleasant Perfume for us in the sight of God the Father. But

But beſides theſe Ointments of the Sanctuary, there were other Ointments alſo that Kings did uſe, who had (as it ſeemeth) the faireſt and ſweeteſt things that could be invented, for themſelves and their Queens, to perfume their Clothes withall; as appears by Queen *Eſther*, who for certain days before ſhe came to the King, perfumed her ſelf with Oyl of Myrrhe and ſweet Odours, and other things which were appointed for the purification of Women. *Eſth.* 2. 12.

And *Solomon* alſo being a Type of Chriſt, is ſaid to have his Garments perfumed with Myrrhe, Aloes, and Caſſia, out of the Ivory Palaces. Now, either of theſe Ointments, whether thoſe that were made for Prieſts, or the Perfume that was made for Kings, do ſerve to ſet forth the moſt excellent ſweetneſs that is in Chriſt, whereby diſtreſſed Conſciences (when once perfumed therewith) do become an Odour of a ſweet ſmelling Sacrifice in the ſight of God. And therefore Chriſt (under the Figure of *Solomon*) is ſaid to be anointed with the Oyl of Gladneſs, becauſe when the Merits of his Actions are given to the diſtreſſed Conſcience, it is delivered from the guilt of Sin, and wrath of God: And therefore it is, that the Bride here ſpeaketh of the ſavour of his Ointments. She looketh not upon any thing of worth in her ſelf, but ſmelleth the ſavour of the good Ointments of her Beloved, which are as a Soveraigh Balm to heal her of all her wounds, and *Pſal.* 45. *Pſal.* 45.

of

of infinite ſweetneſs, to drive away the ſtinking and loathſom ſmell of all her Sins from the preſence of God; whereby ſhe comes to be filled with ſweet and Heavenly delight.

Which teacheth us the true nature and uſe of Faith, which is, that when we feel the ſtink of our Sins, the grievouſneſs of our Wounds, and the loathſomneſs of our filthy Nature; not then to look after any worthineſs in our ſelves, but only to ſmell to the ſweet and precious Ointments of our Beloved; which being preſented before the Juſtice Seat, do ſend forth ſuch a ſmell, that cauſeth the Father to forget the ſtink of all our Sins, and will alſo fill our Minds and Conſciences with Heavenly delight: For to this purpoſe was the Lord Jeſus Chriſt anointed, that our Minds and Conſciences might be fill'd with the ſavour thereof.

—Thy Name is as Ointment poured forth—

In which words the Bride farther amplifieth, why ſhe doth ſo much eſteem of his Love; it is from his Name: For it was promiſed concerning Chriſt, *That a Virgin ſhould Conceive, and bring forth a Son, and his Name ſhall be called* Emanuel; *which is* God *with us.* The underſtanding of this Name (ſhe ſaith) is as precious Ointment, becauſe through this Name, ſhe hath her Mind perfumed, and her Conſcience diſcharged from the wrath of God; for if God be preſent, the fear of his wrath muſt needs be abſent; *If God*

be

be with us, who can be againſt us? There is nothing in Heaven, Earth, or Hell, can poſſibly diſmay us, where God is preſent, being apprehended by Faith.

But there is another thing here which maketh her eſteem his Name; not only becauſe his Name is as Ointment, but alſo as Ointment poured forth.

His Name is not as Ointment kept in a Box, but as Ointment poured out. If Ointment were kept in a Box always, and not poured out, then no Man could ſmell it; but being poured out, it will make an excellent Perfume; as may be ſeen by that Ointment which *Mary* brought in an Alabaſter Box to anoint Chriſt withall: She breaketh the Box, and poureth it out; and it is noted, the whole Houſe did ſmell of the Odour of it: Before the Box was broken, it did not ſmell ſo much; but after the Box was broken, and the Ointment poured out, it did ſmell exceedingly. So although the Humanity of Chriſt be filled with all Grace, that a Creature can be capable of, yet if no Man knew it, what were it the better? But when he is declared and manifeſted to Man, then he is as an Ointment poured out; and this is done by the preaching of the Goſpel. *Joh.* 12.

There is a double conſideration to be had, about the pouring out of Chriſt's Ointments; the one is the pouring them out upon his own doings; the other is, when the Ointment is poured out upon the Virgins.

The

The one of these pourings out respecteth himself; but the other respecteth fainting distressed Minds. The one is the pouring forth of his Ointments upon the Actions of the Redeemer; the other is the pouring them forth into the Consciences of the Redeemed. For the case standeth thus: If the Actions that were Christ's own, had not been perfumed with the excellent savour of his Ointments, they had not been fit, nor of sufficient worth for a Redemption; but seeing they were all perfumed with the Infinite Odour of the Godhead, therefore they became a Sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour, acceptable to the Father. And as the Grace that is in Christ Jesus, did make him shine and glitter in the sight of the Father; so when his Ointments are poured out in the preaching of the Gospel, it maketh him shine and glitter in the Consciences of the Elect. And this is that which the Bride here hath an Eye unto, even to that which is poured upon the Virgins, whereby they came to love him, which could never be, if it were only poured upon his own doings, and no man knew it; therefore that the Virgins may love him, they must smell the sweetness of the Ointments themselves. And this is done when it is poured out in the preaching of the Gospel.

This sheweth us, that without we are perfum'd by these Ointmenes, we are no better in the sight of God than stinking Carrion; and that until the Gospel hath poured out the Ointments,

ments, we can never be perfumed thereby: Therefore when thou feeleſt the ſtink of thy Sins, make haſt to the Box of Perfume, that the ſweet Ointments may be poured upon thee. Pitiful it is, if thou know not the ſtink of thy Sins; and worſe, not to know of this Heavenly Box of Perfume; but worſt of all to thoſe that cannot abide this Heavenly Ointment, but ſtop their Noſtrils at the breaking of the Box; what will become of ſuch? But that the word to them will become a ſavour of Death unto Death. Learn thou therefore to ſmell this ſweet and heavenly Perfume, then ſhalt thou find in thy ſelf the ſame Effects that were wrought in the Virgins, as here followeth.

— *Therefore the Virgins love thee.*

The Church in general, and all the Members thereof in particular, are called Virgins, in reſpect of the purity of their Faith, being formed without the works of the Law. In this ſence, the Church is called a Virgin by St. *Paul, I have preſented you a pure Virgin to Chriſt.* So that ſhe is a Virgin, in regard ſhe is delivered from the Law, and married to Chriſt by Faith alone. She is ignorant of the Law, knowing nothing of the Law, and her own Righteouſneſs, in the matter of her juſtification before God. She hath a ſingle Eye, beholdeth not a double object in diſtreſs of Mind, but fixeth her Eye upon Chriſt alone. If thou formeſt thy Faith only

2 Cor. 11. 2.

only by the promiſe, then thou art delivered from the Law and Curſe of God; but if thou counteſt thine own Works to be Eſſential to Faith, then the Virginity of Faith is loſt; then thou doſt Adulterate from the Promiſe, and art overwhelmed with the Curſe.

This Virginity is preſerved where there is a right diſtinction taught between Faith and the Law; man's Reaſon when it heareth the promiſes to be annexed to the Law, it preſently concludeth, as the *Iſraelites* did at Mount *Sinai*, *All that the Lord commandeth us, we will do*; thinking it ſelf ſufficiently able to perform the Law: Which opinion in Man cauſeth, not only the loſs of true Virginity, but alſo of true and everlaſting Happineſs. Now there being ſo wide a difference between Faith, and Man's opinion of the Law, it will not be amiſs to conſider, what true obedience to the Law is.

There is a double Conſideration to be had about Obedience to the Law, Active and Paſſive. Active Obedience is, when thou putteſt forth all thy Abilities to perform the Law: Paſſive Obedience is, when thou ſubmitteſt thy ſelf to the condemning Power of the Law, and utterly renouncing the Law, flyeſt to Chriſt by Faith. This Paſſive Obedience goeth before Juſtification, forgiveneſs of Sins, and imputation of Righteouſneſs, being promiſed to it; and Active Obedience followeth after. This Paſſive Obedience I call Obedience

to the Law, becauſe it is required in the firſt Command ment; which forbiddeth thee to depend upon thine own Righteouſneſs, which is by the Law; and requireth thee to lay hold on *the Righteouſneſs of God, which is manifeſted without the Law.* So that all thoſe Scriptures that require a neceſſity of the Law, as the doers of the Law ſhall be juſtified; and bleſs thoſe only that are the doers of the Commandments, intend this Active and Paſſive Obedience in order, as hath been ſaid: And therefore muſt be underſtood according to the firſt Commandment, which firſt teacheth us to hear the word of the Curſe, and to juſtifie God; and next it driveth us to the promiſe which juſtifieth us. And this is the true obedience of Faith, which I here call the Paſſive Obedience; which, as ſoon as thou entereſt into, thou becomeſt a pure Virgin to Chriſt, and yieldeſt thy ſelf in Marriage to the Son of God; which, as ſoon as thou apprehendeſt by Faith, thy Conſcience is made joyful and glad by the Righteouſneſs of thy Redeemer, which alſo breedeth in thee Active Obedience, whereby thou joyfully doſt good works unto thy Neighbour. Faith then ſeparateth between Active and Paſſive Obedience, and ſo preſerveth pure Virginity in the Church, for it placeth the one before, and the other after juſtification. *Rom.* 3. 21.

Where this Virginity of Faith is, the Conſcience reſteth, hopeth, and rejoyceth, in Chriſt

Christ his Saviour; and the outward Man joyfully doth good works unto his Neighbour.

—— *Love thee.*

The holy Ghost here sheweth the reason why the Virgins fall in Love with Christ, which is (as was said before) drawn from the savour of his Ointments. The first Commandment is, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine Heart.* But now the Question is, how this Love of God shall be wrought in the Soul, that what is commanded in the Law may be attained to? That which is here set down, resolves this Question, *Therefore the Virgins love thee:* Not because of the Law, but because of the Gospel. So that the Gospel teacheth thee how to attain to all those things which are required in the Law, namely, *To love God, and thy Neighbour*; otherwise, thy Obedience is nothing worth. This had need be well understood by those in the Ministry, lest, instead of teaching Men to love God, they drive them from God, and cause them to hate and abhorr him more than they did before. Lest instead of teaching the Passive Obedience, which breedeth Love to God, they press nothing but the Active Obedience, which driveth all Men from God, for it breedeth in Men an opinion of Righteousness by the Law; which is a Sin directly against the first Commandment.

There-

Therefore Chriſt calleth this manner of Teaching, a teaching Men to break the Law: *He that breaketh the leaſt Commandment, and teacheth Men ſo, ſhall be called the leaſt in the Kingdom of Heaven.* Now to teach Men to break the Law, is, when no other Righteouſneſs is required, to make Men Holy and Righteous in the ſight of God and Conſcience, but only the Righteouſneſs of the Law. Theſe are the leaſt, leaſt of all accounted in the ſight of God, and leaſt of all accounted on in the Church of God, becauſe they forſake the true, and lay another Foundation of Faith and Holineſs, which is contrary to the teſtimony of the holy Ghoſt here; and alſo contrary to the Doctrine of the firſt Commandment, as hath been ſhewed before.

Mat. 5. 19.

This teacheth Men to break the Law, becauſe it eſtabliſheth in Men a falſe opinion of the Law, which bindeth all Men under the Curſe of God.

VERSE IV.

Draw me ——— ——

IT is not here ſaid; Command me, or Compel me, and we will run, but, draw me. This ſheweth what Doctrine it is, by which the Soul is united to Chriſt; it is not done by preſſing or requiring the works of the Law, but by giving or infuſing into the Soul the Righteouſneſs of the Goſpel. For the Church is here in heavineſs and wearineſs, being not

able of her ſelf to go nor ſtand, by reaſon of her Sin, and the greatneſs of her Affliction, by which ſhe is filled with ſo many fears and perplexities, that the Heart is even ready to ſink into deſpair, and to conclude, that God hath caſt it off for ever. Now what ſhall be ſaid to this miſerable Woman in this condition, that may be ſuitable in order to her Peace and Comfort? Shall it be ſaid, go thy way, amend thy Life, keep the Commandments of God, and then thou ſhalt have full deliverance? This is even as for a Malefactor that is condemned by the Law, and nothing can help him but Mercy, to be ſent to his Accuſer for help and deliverance. This is not to draw the Soul to Chriſt, but to wrap it up in Guilt and Bondage. Therefore when thy Conſcience is in diſtreſs, thou muſt then hear no Law, but harken only to the voice of the bleſſed Son of God, which draweth thee to himſelf, not by the Law, but by the Goſpel, which delivereth thee from all thy fears and diſtreſſes, and ſettleth thee in a Kingdom of Peace and Joy. Chriſt doth not put the Conſcience in fear, as the Law doth, but ſpeaketh comfortable words to the trembling afflicted Conſcience. The poor Woman that was taken in Adultery, no doubt was in a trembling and very ſad condition, when ſhe was ſo vehemently accuſed by the *Phariſees*, when they brought her before Chriſt; *Maſter* (ſay they) *this Woman was taken in the very act, muſt ſhe not be ſtoned? For ſo* Moſes *wrote, what ſayeſt*

Joh. 8.

ſayeſt thou? But Chriſt maketh no anſwer to them, only writeth with his Finger on the ground, and biddeth them, He that is without Sin caſt the firſt Stone at her; and they being all convicted, went out one by one: But the Woman ſtayed, and heard Chriſt. No doubt the poor Woman could not chuſe but fall in Love with Chriſt greatly, which appeared by her ſtaying until the *Phariſees* were all gone, and none left but only Chriſt and her ſelf: For Chriſt did not put her in fear, (neither was ſhe afraid of him) but he asked her this Queſtion, *Woman, where are thine Accuſers? Hath no Man condemned thee? She ſaid, No Man, Lord. And Jeſus ſaid, Neither do I Condemn thee.* This was comfortable to the poor Woman that had broken the Seventh Commandment; for it is thus much in effect, in as much as thou hideſt not thy Sin, nor flyeſt away, but abideſt with me, and expect mercy and forgiveneſs from me, therefore behold, I will not Condemn thee, but forgive thy Sin, *Go, and Sin no more.* And by this means was this poor diſtreſſed Woman drawn to Chriſt, even by the loving and gentle carriage of Chriſt her Lord: For ſhe regardeth not the Accuſation of the *Phariſees*, nor yet the Accuſations of her own Conſcience, but liſteneth and harkeneth very diligently to the comfortable News that the Goſpel bringeth. And this is the requeſt of the Bride in this place, when ſhe ſays, *Draw me*, and this muſt we all do when we are in miſery and diſtreſs, even deſire to

hear and reſt upon the bleſſed voice of the Son of God.

—— *And we will run after thee* ——

That is to ſay, in all times of Miſery and Affliction we will make haſt after thee. Having once found how, and after what manner, Chriſt doth draw, which is by preſenting himſelf and his merits unto the Conſcience in diſtreſs, againſt the Accuſations of the Law, and the fear of God's wrath; ſhe finding him to be a Perſon ſo gentle and amiable, one that will not upbraid her, and diſcomfort her, adding Affliction to the Afflicted, but that ſpeaketh kindly and friendly to her; ſaith here, *We will run after thee.* This running is nothing but, with readineſs of Affection, and ſpeedineſs of Action, to make application of the Promiſes in time of diſtreſs; and therefore it is ſaid, *After thee*; that is, after thee for Succour and Comfort, in the time of great Affliction and Miſery.

—— *The* KING *hath brought me into his Chambers* ——

The Church deſireth to be drawn before, after Chriſt began to pull her once, ſhe ran ſpeedily after him. Now here ſhe ſheweth whither ſhe was pulled or drawn, it was into his Chambers; and alſo by whom ſhe was drawn, even

even by the King, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, her Beloved. He that might diſdain her as a Begger, brought her into a place of wonderful joy and delight. Chambers are places where Secrets are uſed to be revealed. *Eliſha* the Prophet told the King of *Iſrael* the words that he ſpake in his Bed-Chambers: So that to be brought into the King's Chambers, is to underſtand his Secrets. Alſo Chambers are places of Safety, wherein the Godly are Commanded to hide themſelves in, in time of diſtreſs, and the Lord's indignation. Now the Spouſe being brought into the King's Chambers, ſhe knoweth the Secrets of the Moſt High, and abideth under the ſhadow of the Almighty; and of this ſhe here ſpeaketh. 2 *Kin.* 6. 12. *Iſa.* 26.

There is a double Conſideration to be had about the King's Chambers; there are Chambers of Grace, and Chambers of Glory: There is the Houſe of God in this Life, and the great Manſion place of his Glory in the Life to come. According to the words of Chriſt, *In my Father's Houſe are many Manſions; I go to prepare a place for you.* In his Chambers in this Life, we ſee him but as in a Glaſs darkly; but when we come into the great Manſion place of his Glory, *We ſhall then behold the King in his Beauty*, and all the delights of his Love for evermore. *Into theſe Chambers* (ſhe ſaith) *the King* [*hath*] *brought me*, becauſe ſhe having received in his lower Houſe a taſt of his Grace, ſhe is ſure ſhe ſhall be exalted into his upper Houſe, where *Joh.* 14. 2. *Iſa.* 33. 17.

ſhe ſhall be ſatisfied with his Glory. And this alſo muſt be noted, that ſhe is brought into the Chambers by the King, not by her own doings, but by Chriſt; for the Law revealeth no Secrets, unleſs it be opened by the Goſpel; neither can it procure us Safety, work in us Grace, or bring us to Glory; it being the voice of the Father, *which no Man knoweth but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him:* Therefore ſhe rejoyceth only in the King, that is to ſay, the Goſpel. Now ſhe farther ſheweth in the next words, what her Affection ſhould be moſt on, when ſhe is brought into the Chambers.

Mat. 11. 27.

—We will rejoyce and be glad in thee—

In which words, ſhe ſheweth what is the object of her joy, both in this Life, and the Life to come, even in the great Manſion place of his Glory, it is [*thee*], meaning Chriſt her Beloved. It is his Perſon only wherein ſhe rejoyceth. And in that ſhe ſpeaketh of rejoycing, it ſheweth what the proper Effect of the Goſpel is, namely to rejoyce. All other Doctrines, beſides the Goſpel, do fill the Conſciences of Men full of fearfulneſs and terrour; but the Effect of the Goſpel is Righteouſneſs, Peace, and Joy, in the holy Ghoſt: Whereby is taught how the true Paſtors (alſo) of the Church may be known. He, who by his principles, worketh not Peace and Gladneſs in the Conſcience, preacheth not the Goſpel; but he by

by whoſe Principles the Conſcience is made joyful, being diſcharged from the guilt of Sin, and the fear of God's wrath; he it is that rightly preacheth the Goſpel. Now in that ſhe ſays [*we will*] *rejoyce*, it teacheth all the Sons and Daughters of *Zion* to put on a holy reſolution of rejoycing; and alſo to endeavour to behold ſuch an Excellency in Chriſt, that may cauſe rejoycing, that ſo the Effects of the Goſpel may appear. Therefore as it is our Duty, ſo it muſt be our Care, to put on this holy Reſolution, with the Bride in this place, *We will be glad and rejoyce in thee.* *Deut.* 17.

—— *We will remember thy Love more than Wine* ——

In theſe words it is ſhewed, how the Bride doth continue in this holy poſture of rejoycing, it is by a continual remembrance of his Love, *We will remember thy Love.* And on the contrary, when there is fainting in the day of Adverſity, it is becauſe the Conſolation is forgotten. And when ſhe ſays [*more than Wine*] ſhe meaneth, more than the having or wanting of any outward thing whatſoever. Reaſon is affected with things that are profitable and pleaſant, and much dejected in the want of them; but Faith infuſeth more joy into the Heart than Corn and Wine, and all outward things. *Heb.* 12.

—— *The Upright love thee.*

Whereby is meant, thoſe that are upright in their Principles, that walk uprightly according to the truth of the Goſpel; and alſo that are upright towards Men, in all their Carriage and Converſation; that attribute to Chriſt the Dominion and Government over the Conſcience, to ſave it from the guilt of Sin, and wrath of God; and attribute to the Law the Dominion over the Fleſh. Theſe are they that love God. And on the contrary, thoſe that are Lame and Halting, in reſpect of their Principles, that are partly for Chriſt, and partly for Works, to make them Righteous in the ſight of God, are not the Upright here ſpoken of, but come far ſhort in ſetling and eſtabliſhing the love of God in the Soul.

Verse V.

I am Black ——

THis Speech is directed to the Daughters of *Jeruſalem*: Blackneſs was the habit of Mourners, as appears by the Prophet *Jeremiah*. The Bride therefore in ſaying ſhe is *Black*, ſays, ſhe is a Mourner; which is meant, in reſpect of her outward condition here in this World,

Jer. 8. 21.

World, which cometh by reaſon of her Sin and the Croſs. Of this *Job* complaineth when he was in his great Affliction, *My Skin* (ſaith he) *is Black upon me.* Now becauſe the Daughters of *Jeruſalem* do often-times deſpiſe the Goſpel, when they behold the People that profeſs it to be in ſo great Affliction and Miſery, therefore the Bride directeth her Speech to them, to take away the ſcandal of the Croſs and Offences that might ariſe, and ſaith as followeth in the next words: *Job* 30. 30.

—— *But comely* ——

That is, although I am *black* by reaſon of my Sin and Affliction, yet I am *comely* in the Perſon of my Beloved, who doth not for this cauſe reject me, but joyneth himſelf unto me, and cloaths me with the Garments of Righteouſneſs; which teacheth us the right uſe of Faith: Which is, That when a Man is as black as Hair-Cloth, by reaſon of his Sin, and the greatneſs of the Croſs; yet at that very time, to behold the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to be holding forth his promiſe of Grace and Favour to him. And alſo this is farther to be noted, that nothing comes between this Blackneſs and Comelineſs, but only Faith in her Redeemer. For ſhe beholdeth nothing in her ſelf, but that ſhe is covered all over with blackneſs and deformity; and yet ſhe reſteth upon the promiſe of her Beloved. And thus muſt we alſo do in time

time of great distress of Mind, when we are utterly void of all hope in our selves and all Creatures; yet then to lift up our Eyes and Hearts to our Redeemer, who looketh upon us, and joyneth himself unto us, to take away from us our present Miseries.

—— *O ye Daughters of* Jerusalem ——

By the Daughters of *Jerusalem* in this place, I understand, all that party in the visible Church that are yet unconverted, being contrary in their Principles and Practise to the Bride.

For *Jerusalem* is not only to be understood of the Free-Mother and Spiritual City, which bringeth forth Children free in Spirit, free from the Bondage and Curse of the Law; but also
Gal. 4.25. of that Mother which gendereth all her Children unto Bondage.

In my judgment they define not aright, that understand by the Daughters of *Jerusalem* in this Song, the Elect of God. And by the Queens and Virgins, mentioned in some part of this Song, Regenerate Persons; and to be all waiters on, and well-wishers to the Bride; setting forth the Bride to be (as it were) a stately Queen, and all the rest in the visible Church to be (as it were) Ladies of Honour, that do attend and wait on the Bride.

True it is, that in the sight of God she is a thing much set by, she hath the holy Ghost for her Comforter, the Angels to be her Ministring Spirits;

Spirits; and there is joy in Heaven at her Converſion: But in this World ſhe is reproached, and lightly eſteemed, even by thoſe that ſeem to carry great eſteem in the viſible Church.

I underſtand then by the Daughters of *Jeruſalem*, when they are ſpoken to by the Bride, as in this place, to mean the Children of the Bond-woman, that build upon Principles that do exclude them from the Inheritance of God; but when they are ſpoken of jointly, as in *Song* 3. then to mean all the Children of the Church viſible, united into Church Fellowſhip by the Signs and Seals of God's Covenant.

For the holy Ghoſt ſetteth down the two Covenants under the ſimilitude of two Mothers, *Agar* and *Sarah*, which brought forth two ſorts of Children in *Abraham*'s Family. Now, as in *Abrahám*'s Family, (which was the viſible Church of God) two ſorts of Children were born, the Children of the Bond-woman, and the Children of the Free; ſo likewiſe are there two ſorts of People brought forth in the viſible Church throughout all the World, the People of the Law, and the People of Grace. Alſo as *Agar* the Bond-woman brought forth a Son to *Abraham*, mocking and perſecuting *Iſaac*; ſo likewiſe Mount *Agar*, or *Sina*, bringeth forth unto God a Son, which is an Enemy to the Faith of Chriſt, *Gal.* 4.

This Enmity ariſeth for want of a right underſtanding of the promiſes annexed to the Law; therefore the Bond-woman requireth the works

works of the Law to be done, for the obtaining of the promise, and about this point she quarrelleth and contendeth with the Free Mother, who teacheth a contrary Doctrine, namely, that the Righteousness of the Gospel is to be obtained by Faith without the Law; and this point she teacheth, and herein lieth the Controversie.

These two Mothers are often in this Song brought in speaking one to another, chiefly in the Fifth and Sixth Chapters, where each side commendeth and boasteth her own Beloved. The right understanding of this one thing (I humbly conceive) is the principal Key to unlock the Mystery of the whole Song.

Now in this place the Children of the Free-Mother are brought in speaking, and the sum of the Speech is, to justifie her Doctrine against the Daughters, who conclude, that therefore she is laden with so many and heavy Afflictions, in regard she holdeth so wicked a Doctrine; to which she maketh this Answer: *O ye Daughters of* Jerusalem, *ye judge my Principles to be false because of my outward colour, which proceedeth* (as she sheweth afterwards) *from an outward Cause, to wit, the Sun, and not from any inward Principle I hold and teach: And this I tell you farther, that although I am black and deformed in your sight, yet am I a comely Person in the sight of my Beloved; for being covered with his white Rayment, his own Righteousness, my blackness is taken away, and I am comely in his sight.*

She

She confesseth that she is black, in regard of her own Righteousness, yet she holdeth this fast notwithstanding, *that she is comely in Christ's sight*, which teacheth us the true Rule of Faith; which is first to confess our blackness before God, before we apply unto our selves, that we are made comely through Christ. For as he that presenteth his own Righteousness before God, excludeth himself from Christ, so he that by Faith presenteth himself a Sinner before him, joyneth himself to Christ. And this Rule must we all learn, which is, First, by Faith to present our selves before God confessing our Sins, that so by the same Faith we may be joyned to the Righteousness of Christ our Lord; then although we are of an evil colour in respect of our outward hiew, yet shall we appear of a comely colour in the sight of Christ our Beloved.

And also then may we easily overcome the Daughters, who all stick upon this Proposition, and conclude, thou wantest the Righteousness of the Law, therefore thou art condemned. To which we must answer, I grant the premises, but deny the Conclusion. I confess I want the Righteousness of the Law; but I have another Righteousness, even the Righteousness of Christ, by which I am justified and saved.

—— *As the Tents of* Kedar ——

Now here ſhe ſetteth out her deformity by a compariſon, *The Tents of Kedar.* The *Kedarims* dwelt in black and hairy Tents, were a Warlike People, and never built Houſes; but being keepers of Cattel, had their Tents in open Fields; ſuch as Gentlemen have at Court, or Men of War lying open to the Air.

Theſe Tents of theirs were deformed, partly by the Sun, and partly by Storms and Weather, and were not of any outward beauty; therefore the Bride is compared to theſe Tents. Yet ſome think the compariſon is of the *Kedarims* that dwelt in thoſe Tents, who were of the Poſterity of *Iſhmael*, (for *Kedar* was the ſecond Son of *Iſhmael*, whoſe Poſterity lived in Tents) theſe living ſo near the Sun, were even as *Black Mores*; but which way ſo ever it be taken, the compariſon ſerves to ſet out the deformity of the Church, which yet notwithſtanding her blackneſs outwardly, ſhe will not loſe the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt her Lord; and therefore ſhe addeth,

Gen. 25. 13.

—— *As the Curtains of* Solomon.

King *Solomon* had a very rich and ſumptuous Bed, as is to be ſeen in *Song* 3. for the entertainment of *Pharaoh*'s Daughter, and other of his Queens. And as he made himſelf a Bed, ſo

ſo he had Curtains alſo pertaining to the Bed, which Curtains were not only for Ornament to adorn the Bed, but alſo for uſe to preſerve it from defilement. And *Solomon* being a King excelling in Riches and Wiſdom, no doubt his Curtains were very rich and glorious.

Now as King *Solomon* had a Bed for the entertainment of his Queen, ſo the Lord Jeſus Chriſt hath a Bed, wherein he entertaineth his Queen; and the Bed of Chriſt is his Church, in which Company he delighteth himſelf. And the Curtains about this Bed are the Saints, which do adorn the Bed, in keeping the Doctrine of Chriſt pure, from being defiled. Theſe are ſaid (by an indefinite Speech) to be ſixty valiant Men, of the valiant of *Iſrael*; theſe are the choice ones in the Church, Men that are expert in the Faith, that are able to make War againſt all Heretics and Seducers: Theſe are like *Solomon's* Curtains, being always round about the Bed in all Ages of the Church, to preſerve the Doctrine of Chriſt from falſe Gloſſes. Theſe are knit unto Chriſt by Faith, and one to another by Love and Unity in Doctrine. So that even as the Curtains of the Tabernacle were coupled together with Taches of Gold, to make one Tabernacle; ſo by theſe golden Taches of Faith and Love, the Saints are knit to Chriſt, and one to another. *Song* 3. *Exod.* 26.

And in this ſenſe the Bride ſaith here, ſhe is comely, not only in reſpect of her Faith towards God, but alſo in that ſhe is an Ornament

ment to the Bed, being inſtrumental to preſerve the Church of God from being defiled, by reaſon of corrupt Doctrine.

This teacheth us what the Life of the Saints is, and muſt be in this World, even to keep the Church of God (as much as in us lyeth) from being polluted by falſe Doctrine, for they are ſet round about the Bed for this purpoſe, to fight againſt Satan and his Miniſtry; and the reaſon and wiſdom of the Fleſh, (which always oppoſeth and fighteth againſt the Goſpel) and alſo to walk in Unity one towards another, and towards all Men.

Verse VI.

Look not upon me becauſe I am black, becauſe the Sun hath looked upon me; my Mother's Children were angry with me, they made me the Keeper of the Vineyards, but mine own Vineyard have I not kept.

IT is as much as to ſay this, Look not upon me with contempt, to deſpiſe the Doctrine I profeſs, nor yet upon my ſtains and blemiſhes, as if I were caſt off and rejected of my Beloved; for although my Skin be of an evil colour, this doth not proceed from any evil there is in the Goſpel, but from an outward cauſe, to wit, the

the Sun; the Sun hath looked upon me, therefore I would not be deſpiſed, and counted a Caſt-away, for it is not my natural hew, I am comely in the ſight of my Beloved. True it is, I have ſome troubles upon me, my Mother's Children do afflict me. There be many of the ſame Linage I am of, in reſpect of the outward ſtate of the Church, we have all one Mother; but they have not the Spirit of Adoption, to become the Children of my heavenly Father. My Mother's Sons have not true Faith in Chriſt, nor Hearts to live, as Brethren and Siſters ought to do: For although we were born in one Houſe, and brought up in one Family, did all eat the ſame Spiritual Meat, and drink the ſame Spiritual Drink; Yet they are fallen away by evil Principles, and into an evil courſe of Life; and becauſe I am not willing to follow their evil ways in Life and Doctrine, therefore they are angry with me. They have canker'd Minds, full of malice, and very much enflamed againſt me; for when I was about mine own buſineſs in the Lord's Vineyard, to do good to every Vine, according to my power and skill, they made me (through my own frailty and weakneſs) to look to other Vines; not only to do ſuch Orders, obſerve ſuch Ceremonies, and preach ſuch Doctrines, as I was never appointed to do; but alſo ſought to draw me quite away from the Lord's Vineyard, to other Vineyards: And to perſuade me hereunto, they would make me a Keeper; they would ſet me in an Office to

keep out the defiled and unclean, leſt their Vineyard ſhould be ſpoiled by evil Beaſts: And while I was thus imployed, yielding my ſelf too much this way, they brought me quite out of Love with my own Vineyard, mine own Vineyard have I not kept; and in forſaking mine own Vineyard, which I too much conſented to, I had even loſt the benefits of Chriſt my Lord and Saviour.

The Bride here ſheweth, that although ſhe be black and ſtained, and out of countenance, yet ſhe would not be look'd upon proudly, with diſdain and contempt, but as an object of Pity and Mercy; yet this ſhe ſheweth to be the practiſe of the Daughters of *Jeruſalem* in all Ages of the Church, to cover all things that is comely in the Bride, to bury that in Oblivion, but to faſten their Eyes very heedfully upon that which is her blackneſs and deformity. Such is the infirmity of Man's nature, that if there be any blemiſhes and ſtains in others, that we curiouſly obſerve, and ſuffer our Affections to be even quite abated from them therefore; but if there be any thing worthy of Praiſe, that we skip over and take little notice thereof. That which is good in us, we would have all Men look upon, and have us in high eſtimation for; but in dealing with other Men, we behold every ſpot, blemiſh, and ſtain. All Men are willing to have their own deformities skipped over, and their vertues highly praiſed and honoured; but are loth to take any notice of the vertues

vertues in others, although they be ever ſo excellent and worthy of praiſe. But why do we look upon that which defameth the Perſon in ſome things? And do not as well behold that which will ſet him out in other things. If there be ſome blemiſh in an Houſe, we take not much notice of it, but, moſt of all, behold that which will make it ſaleable: Or, if a ground be infected with Herbs and Roots, that in ſome reſpects may be unprofitable; yet, if in other reſpects they are uſeful, we account of them, and cheriſh them. Now, if in Herbs and Roots we reſpect the vertues, as well as the baſeneſs, why do not we the like by the Church of God? Why do not we mark the beſt things to help to inflame Charity, and to nouriſh true Chriſtian Love, as well as to faſten our Eyes upon the deformities of the Church, which is the ready way to ſeparate our Affections from it.

She alſo complaineth farther, than in leaning too much to her Mother's Sons, ſhe forſook (as it were) the fruit of her own Vineyard, even the Righteouſneſs of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Of this ſort of People the Church of God hath ever been peſtered withall, ſuch that fall away themſelves, and then ſeek to draw Diſciples after them; ſome to follow Rules and Orders which are not commanded, that live within the Church, and to draw Men into an evil courſe of Life, and others which ſeek to draw Men from the Lord's Vineyard, unto

other Vineyards, whereby they come to loſe the Fruits of Chriſt's Death and Reſurrection. For it muſt well be noted, that although in ſeparation from Churches, a great ſhew of Holineſs, may be pretended; yet under that ſhew of Holineſs, the greateſt Sin lyeth hid, which is a departing from the Goſpel.

And the reaſon is, becauſe the ground of ſeparating from one Church to another, is not becauſe the gifts of God are wanting, in the Church ſeparated from, which are the Word and Sacraments, but becauſe of Men's corruptions; neither is the ground of their uniting into another Church fellowſhip, becauſe of the word of God, but the works of Men. Now becauſe they make another ground of Church fellowſhip, which is not the Goſpel, preferring the abominable works of Men, before and beyond the Word and Righteouſneſs of God, having nothing to glory in, but only in the Act of Separation; therefore by the very Act of Separation, the Fruits of the Vineyard are loſt. And this is that which the Bride here toucheth upon, and confeſſeth ſhe did yield too much this way; (and about this point moſt that are godly, firſt or laſt are tottering) yet ſhe recovered her ſelf, and confeſſeth, that ſhe had rather forſake her Mother's Sons, although they be angry with her, than by following their Doctrine and way to loſe the Fruits of her own Vineyard, and purchaſe the diſpleaſure of her Beloved.

There-

Therefore let every Man in the Church of God keep to his own Vineyard, and do the Lord's work; firſt in looking to himſelf, then in planting the young Vines: Alſo in nouriſhing thoſe that are planted, there is work for every Man to do, and God will give a liberal Reward in the end; every Man at the laſt ſhall have his Penny.

VERSE VII.

Tell me (O thou whom my Soul loveth) where thou feedeſt, where thou makeſt thy Flocks to reſt at Noon, for why ſhould I be as one that turneth aſide by the Flocks of thy Companions?

IN this temptation the Bride ſheweth what ſhe did, ſhe made her requeſt to her Beloved, and to win him to hear and grant her requeſt, ſhe calleth him, not by ſuch Titles as are uſually given to him in Scripture, as the *Meſſias*, or the Anointed of the Lord, or the wonderful Councellour, but by that Title ſhe felt (to be due to him) in her own Affections: *Oh thou whom my Soul loveth! Tell me (O thou whom my Soul loveth) where thou feedeſt*; I know that where thou feedeſt, there is thy Preſence; and where thy Preſence is, there is thy Flock; and

therefore I pray thee tell me: For I am a poor ſilly Woman thy Spouſe, and have ſome Troubles upon me by reaſon of my Mother's Sons, and am many times troubled in Conſcience, becauſe I do things contrary to my Conſcience, and cannot tell where to have Peace but in thee; therefore, I pray thee, *tell me where thou uſeſt to feed*, and alſo *makeſt thy Flocks to reſt at Noon.* What that Doctrine is, that is thy People's reſt; and in what Company of People, the Principles of that Doctrine are taught; that ſo even as Shepherds in Countries near the Sun, do not only feed their Sheep in fit Paſtures, but alſo drive them to ſhade at Noon. So alſo in the time of Perſecution from my Mother's Sons, I may know in the heat of the day whither to run, to be ſafe under thy Couch. For if thou doſt it not, I may very much hurt my ſelf, by degenerating into a ſtrange Vine; for others feed Flocks, and make ſhews to be thy Companions, which are but Seducers and Deceivers; and why ſhould I be as one that turneth aſide, following after thoſe Flocks, for want of underſtanding the place where thou art always reſident?

Queſt. But what is the cauſe the Church ſo loveth Chriſt whom ſhe never ſaw?

Anſw. The cauſe is, becauſe ſhe perceiveth in him the nature and properties of Love, for he giveth unto her freely that which ſhe loſt in Adam, which is, deliverance from the Curſe, and everlaſting Condemnation; Therefore it is, that

ſhe

ſhe loveth him with her Soul; and this knowledge ſhe hath by Faith alone, and not from her Works: for although by Works ſhe manifeſteth her Faith before Men, yet nothing can evidence Faith to her own Conſcience, but only Faith it ſelf. For nothing can evidence Faith in the laſt Reſolution of it to be Faith, but the infuſing of Grace into the Soul, without precedent preparation; but in all Works there muſt be ſome precedent Preparative to make them good. Now what ever that precedent Preparative is that makes them good Works, the ſame is the Light and Evidence of Faith it ſelf; and nothing can evidence Works (to us) to be good but Faith; therefore Faith alone muſt evidence it ſelf in the laſt Reſolution of Faith, it alone being infuſed into the Soul, without any precedent preparation. Now Faith is an Evidence, becauſe it being a rational Faculty, knows what is given us of God, and alſo knows what is by us received.

The laſt Reſolution of Faith is, when the Evidence of Works is loſt, and nothing is left to aſſure us but the Word alone.

And one thing more (amongſt many) is chiefly to be noted. The Bride here loveth Chriſt with her Soul, and yet ſhe is ignorant in many things which are alſo of concernment; ſhe knoweth not where he feedeth, but ſcruples ſhe hath about the place; nor where to reſt her ſelf in the heat of the day; nor how to anſwer ſomething objected againſt her by Seducers; yet ſhe is not diſmayed, and driven out of her Faith, notwithſtanding all this, but loveth Chriſt with her Soul: Which muſt com-

fort thoſe poor wretches that are ignorant in many points, that cannot tell how to diſcourſe of high Matters, nor to anſwer many Objections that are made againſt them by Seducers; yet if they know but this one thing, that Chriſt hath given them freely that which they have loſt in *Adam*, in this may they rejoyce, and by this they may certainly know, that they are of the number of Chriſt's Flock, that do pertain to the Bride-bed.

Verse VIII.

If thou know not, (O thou faireſt among Women) go thy way forth by the Foot-ſteps of the Flock, and feed thy Kids beſides the Shepherds Tents.

THeſe words are the Anſwer of Chriſt to the Churches requeſt, wherein he ſheweth his Compaſſion to her, although ſhe was ignorant in ſome things, and therefore he anſwereth her thus: If thou knoweſt not aright the place where I feed, yet I account of thee, therefore be not diſmayed, thy Perſon is in favour, for thou art to me *the faireſt among ſt Women*; therefore hearken to me, and follow my direction: *Go thy way forth by the Foot-ſteps of the Flock.* Mark the track of all the Flock that

that went before thee, Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apoſtles, and other holy Men of God, that both knew my voice, and followed me; and ſee where they did feed, and what they reſted on in the heat of the day, and when thou haſt found the track, there *feed thy Kids by the Shepherds Tents.*

Chriſt here termeth his Bride, *The faireſt amongſt Women*, although ſhe hath many imperfections in her; and the reaſon is, becauſe he covereth all her deformities with his own Righteouſneſs and Merits; therefore he taketh pleaſure in her, hideth all her ſtains and blemiſhes, and mentioneth nothing but her fairneſs and beauty.

This is contrary to the practice of the World, who walk after another Rule; who, if they ſee a Man that profeſſeth Religion to be filled with many excellent Vertues that be worthy of praiſe, yet if they can (with their curious Eyes) but ſee any imperfection in him, they quickly ſet him upon the Stage, to make him a ſpectacle to all the World. They are willing to behold his ſtains and blemiſhes, and to cover him with Infamy and Reproach; but they bury all things that are comely in him in the Grave of Oblivion. Theſe, by their deſpiſing others, do highly magnifie themſelves; but if they follow the Rules of Chriſt in other things, (as they ſuppoſe they do) why do they not alſo follow the Example of Chriſt in this, which of all others is ſo worthy of imitation?

tion? Why do they walk ſo directly contrary to Chriſt, and to that which is the principal Duty in practical new Obedience? Chriſt by his Righteouſneſs covereth the deformities of the humbled Sinner, and calleth him the faireſt; theſe, by their Righteouſneſs, cover all things that are worthy of praiſe, and upon the ſight of ſome imperfections, count him the filthieſt of all others. This is a ſhame to all that account themſelves Chriſtians, eſpecially to thoſe that eſteem themſelves great in the Church, being Teachers of others, who talk much of the Goſpel in their Doctrine; but why do they throw it down by their practice? Doth not the Goſpel principally teach Pity and Compaſſion towards Men, even as God hath ſhewed Pity and Compaſſion towards us? If theſe Men were ſo Righteous indeed, as they ſeem to be in their own Eyes, would they not then do to others, as they would be done unto themſelves? They themſelves are willing to have their own Vertues praiſed, and their Deformities buried, and this they greedily gape after; but in dealing with others, they make them as the filth of the World, and the off-ſcouring amongſt Men. Now who ſhall cover the Deformities of theſe Men before God, when they will ſhew no Pity nor Compaſſion to their Brethren before Men? How far theſe Men are beſides the Mark, it is eaſie for all Men to judge.

Let every poor humbled Sinner therefore receive the Conſolation of Chriſt here, and not be

be too much diſmayed at his own deformity, nor yet too much dejected with the Reproaches of Men. Chriſt ſaith, *If thou know not, yet thou art to me the faireſt amongſt Women.* Knowledge is the Eye of the Soul, which ought to be the guide of all Men's Actions, and the Eye being blemiſhed, a great part of the Churches beauty is ſtained and defaced, yet then if we ſeek unto him (as the Church doth here) and humble our ſelves before him, he will ſpeak loving and comfortable words unto us.

The Church is alſo directed in this Verſe to feed her Kids by the Shepherds Tents.

It muſt be noted, that the Shepherds Tents were always where the Ark was, which was the viſible Sign of God's Preſence. When the Ark of God was in *Shiloh*, the Shepherds Tents were there. And when the Ark was brought into the Temple at *Jeruſalem*, then the Shepherds Tents were there. And in *Num.* 2. 17. we read, that the Children of *Iſrael* were to pitch their Tents about the Tabernacle, (of which the *Levites* had the charge) becauſe the Ark was there. And as the Camp of the *Levites* was ſet forwards with the Tabernacle, ſo every Man in his place was to ſet forwards by his Standard. But with us the Ark of God is *Baptiſm*, becauſe *Baptiſm* is the viſible Sign to which the promiſe of Chriſt's Preſence is made.

1 *Sam.* 1.

Mat. 28.

Now in that it is ſaid, *There feed thy Kids*, it ſheweth where the true Church is, even where the Ark is. *Baptiſm* and the *Lord's Supper* then are the Shepherds Tents. Not a reſting in the work done; but where the right reaſon of their Inſtitution is preſerved and taught, there are the true Shepherds, and there is good feeding.

Now in that it is ſaid, *Feed thy* [*Kids*], it ſheweth, that the Flock of Chriſt conſiſteth of little Kids, as well as of greater and ſtronger Cattel; ſo Chriſt is ſaid, to *gather the Lambs in his Arms:* Which ſheweth, he hath not only Sheep, but alſo Lambs in his Flock. *Iſa.* 40.

And alſo it being ſaid, [*there*] *feed thy Kids*, it teacheth us this; that the Mother cannot have any feeding for her little Kids, unleſs ſhe bring them firſt under the promiſe of God: So that even as the natural Mother cannot feed her Babe, unleſs ſhe give it the Teat; no more can the Spiritual Mother feed her little Kids, unleſs ſhe firſt bring them to the Ark. Learn therefore the true knowledge of the Ark, then thou haſt found the Shepherds Tents; thither bring thy Kids, and feed them with Heavenly nouriſhment.

VERSE IX.

I have compared thee (O my Love) to a company of Horſes in Pharaoh's *Chariot.*

THis ſentence ſeems to hang upon the former, and ſheweth how well Chriſt is pleaſed with the requeſt of the Bride in the former Verſe, and declareth his loving Affection to her: And therefore he begins with a Note of Admiration, *O my Love, I have compared thee!* I am loth to ſet thee out by thy ſelf alone, I will do it by a ſimilitude; and many things there are I might compare thee to, but of them all, I will ſet thee out by Horſes; and not by Horſes of the meaneſt ſort, but by Horſes in *Pharaoh*'s Chariot.

Egyptian Horſes were the chiefeſt in all the World, both for Battel and Courage, and alſo higheſt in Account. And the Horſe is a Warlike Creature, that rejoyceth in his ſtrength, and goeth on to meet the Armed Men. And the Lord did make the Houſe of *Judah* as his goodly Horſe in the day of Battel, which treadeth down the Enemy as mire in the Streets; and therefore the Bride is here compared to Horſes, in regard of her Faith and Doctrine, by which ſhe treadeth down, and ſpoileth, all her Spiritual Enemies. And alſo to Horſes in *Phara-*

1 *Kin.* 28. *Job* 39. *Zac.* 10.3.

Pharaoh's Chariot; that as a company of *Pharaoh*'s goodly Horſes, well harneſſed together, running with courage and ſwiftneſs, made much for the Honour of the King; ſo the Church, in ſhouldering together couragiouſly for the deſtruction of Antichriſt and his Kingdom, maketh much for the Honour of Chriſt her Beloved.

Which ſheweth, that the Lord's delight is in exerciſing his Church with Enemies and Seducers; not only for the tryal of her Faith and Patience, but alſo that the Kingdom of Satan may thereby be overthrown, and totally deſtroyed. Therefore no man muſt take offence, if he be exerciſed in this kind; but ſet forth himſelf manfully to defend the Goſpel, and patiently to continue in the Exerciſe thereof.

Verse X.

Thy Cheeks are comely with rows of Jewels, and thy Neck with Chains of Gold.

IN the former Verſe the Church is commended for her Courage and Skill, in making War againſt her Spiritual Enemies; here ſhe is commended for her Beauty. Some ſay, the modeſty of the Church is here praiſed, which appeareth in

in her Cheeks when ſhe bluſheth for ſhame, having ſinned againſt God. But the words are an Allegory, wherein one thing is expreſſed, and another thing is meant; therefore we are not to underſtand by the Cheeks and Neck the Complexion of the Face, but what ever may make the Bride beautiful and comely to behold. That which gives light for the opening of this place, is in *Prov.* 20. 15. *The Lips of Knowledge are a precious Jewel.* And *Prov.* 1. 8, 9. The *Law* is ſaid to be *an Ornament to the Head, and as Chains about the Neck.* By which Scriptures it appeareth, that as the fine Women in *Solomon*'s time did uſe to adorn their Cheeks and Necks with Jewels, ſet in rows, and Chains of Gold, for an addition of their Beauty; ſo alſo the Church is adorned with Jewels, Chains of Gold, and Ornaments about her Head and Neck, which is a right knowledge and underſtanding of the Law of Grace, which maketh her to appear beautiful and glorious. Alſo it is noted by ſome, that the word *Tor*, which ſignifies a Row (having Affinity with the *Hebrew* word *Torah*, which hath the name of the Law, which is as Chains) is uſed alſo for a Turtle Dove, and then the words may be read thus; *Thy Cheeks are comely with rows of Jewels, wherein are Figures of Turtles.* And the Turtle Doves were to be uſed in offering Sacrifice, which Offerings and Sacrifices were Types and Figures of Chriſt's ſufferings in the Fleſh.

Now

Now this teacheth us, First, what it is that doth beſpangle the Church (as it were) with Chains and Jewels, even the right underſtanding and opening of God's Law; therefore the Doctrine of the Goſpel is compared to Gold, Silver, and precious Stones. And the Windows or Lights of the Church to Agates, and the laying of her Foundation is ſaid to be with Saphirs, and all manner of precious Stones; which things, as they do wonderfully ſhine and glitter in the Eyes of Men, ſo the right underſtanding and opening of the Myſtery of the Goſpel, doth make the Church to ſhine and glitter in the Eyes of all thoſe that reliſh the ſame.

1 Cor. 3. 12.
Iſa. 54. 12.
Rev. 21. 19.

Next (in that the Cheeks are comely with Figures of Turtles) it teacheth us, that as ſoon as the Church is adorned with Jewels and Chains as aforeſaid, as ſoon as once her Doctrine comes to make a glittering in the Church, it bringeth upon her the Image or Figure of the Turtle, that is to ſay, Perſecution and the Croſs: She is brought into a ſuffering condition for Chriſt's ſake, and here ſhe is commended and ſaid to be beautiful and very comely, in that ſhe patiently beareth the Image or Figure of the Turtle, in ſuffering Calamities for Chriſt's ſake; which Calamities will come whereſoever the Goſpel is truly preached; and therefore the Cheeks of the Church are here commended.

And

And thus when the ſufferings of Chriſt were ſpoken of by the Prophet, it is ſaid, *I gave my Back to the Smiters, and my Cheeks to them that plucked off the Hair*; where the Cheeks and the Back only are named, for all Chriſt's ſufferings, in regard of his Humanity. And thus it is with the Church here. So *Jeremiah* endured ſmitings, and *Paul* buffettings; but every buffetting that comes upon the Face for Chriſt's ſake and the Goſpel, although it marr the Viſage in the ſight of Men; yet it is (as it were) the planting of a Jewel in the ſight of God. *Iſa.* 50.

He then that deſireth to be ſpangled with rows of Jewels, and Chains of Gold, muſt be ſure to learn, in the firſt place, the right underſtanding of the Law of Grace, that his Doctrine may make a glittering in the Church, that the Heavenly City may be cloathed with broidered work, and (as it were) decked with Ornaments; and the Conſciences of poor diſtreſſed Sinners may be garniſhed with all manner of precious Stones, whereby they may be ſecured from the wrath of God. *Eze.* 16. 10.

Next, he muſt arm himſelf quietly and patiently to ſuffer for the Goſpel. Then are the Cheeks comely with rows of Jewels; then thou doſt rightly bear the Image and Figure of the Turtle Dove, even of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who hath loved thee, and ſuffered for thee.

Verse XI.

We will make thee Borders of Gold, with Studs of Silver.

These words are a promise of the Church's farther enlargement. By Borders are here meant Salvation, begun in this Life, but perfected in the Life to come, which the Prophet calleth *Walls and Bulwarks*; Isa. 26. because, when the knowledge of Salvation comes into the Conscience, it is a most sure and certain Defence. Now here is an increase of the knowledge of Salvation promised, that she may live in abundance of peace and quietness of Heart, according to the words of the Prophet, *Violence shall no more be heard within thy Walls, wasting, nor Destruction within thy Borders*; which must be understood of the inward Man here in this Life, when the fear of God's wrath is banish'd out of the Conscience through Faith in Christ, but as it concerneth the Life to come; it meaneth that eternal and everlasting Felicity, which is prepared for us in the Kingdom of Heaven.

And it being said, [*We*] *will make thee*, it sheweth, that the preparation of Salvation for us is a work of the whole Deity; and also, how both Grace and Glory comes unto us, not because of our works, but from the promise of God alone. And

And in that the Borders are promiſed to be made of Gold, it meaneth, the preaching of the Goſpel, which is compared to Gold, Silver, and precious Stones; and therefore the Streets of the City (wherein the Bride liveth, walketh, and rejoyceth) are ſaid to be all of pure Gold. And the Borders being made with Silver Studs, it meaneth the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, inherent in himſelf, and imputed to us, which is as refined Silver, free from all the droſs of Man's original and actual Corruptions, and is of ſufficient value to defend our ſinful Souls from the fears of the Law, and malice of Satan; and alſo to purchaſe for us that moſt excellent and eternal weight of Glory, which we ſhall one day enjoy with the bleſſed Deity, and all the Saints and Angels for evermore.

1 *Cor.* 3.

Rev. 21.

VERSE XII.

While the King ſitteth at his Repaſt, my Spikenard ſendeth forth the ſmell thereof.

THeſe words are the ſpeech of the Church, and do ſet forth the benefit ſhe receiveth from her Beloved, when ſhe ſitteth at Repaſt with him. To ſit at Repaſt, as ſome ſay, is to ſit round in a Circle, round about compaſſing a thing; like as when Men ſit at a round Table to

refreſh themſelves at Dinner, or at Break-faſt. So that Chriſt's ſitting at Repaſt, is his ſitting in Compaſs. And the Compaſs or Circle that he ſits in is the Earth, with his Choſen on Earth; ſo that in all places where his Choſen are, there ſitteth Chriſt at Repaſt. And when the Bride meeteth the King at Repaſt, ſhe ſays, *My Spikenard gave the ſmell thereof.*

The *Spikenard* is a Flower growing in *Syria*, bitter of taſt, but wonderful ſweet of ſmell; and that which comes out of the Flower, giveth alſo a moſt excellent ſcent to a Man's Noſe.

Now, as at Banquets, Kings, and other great Perſons, did uſe to come with their ſweet Perfumes to make a moſt fragrant ſcent to their Queens, and others; ſo doth the Bride here when ſhe meeteth the King at Repaſt, ſhe is perfumed with the King's Spikenard.

Now by the King here, is meant the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; and by his Repaſt, the Goſpel; and by his Sitting, that wonderful reſt and content he taketh, in feeding his People with Knowledge and Underſtanding; and by the Spikenard, the joyful ſcent of his own Righteouſneſs and Merits; and the word [*while*], notes the time when ſhe receiveth this Heavenly Oyl, even when the King ſitteth at Repaſt, that is, when the Goſpel is preaching. And ſhe calleth it my Spikenard, becauſe the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt is hers by imputation; and by ſending forth the ſmell thereof, ſhe meaneth the

the perfuming of all thoſe humbled Sinners that come to the Kings Repaſt.

Firſt then we muſt diligently obſerve where the King ſitteth at Repaſt, and alſo when he ſitteth to feed, and what the true ſcent of the Spikenard is; that we may be in readineſs to receive it our ſelves, and then to open the Box, and pour it out to others, that the whole Houſe may be filled with the Odour thereof.

VERSE XIII.

A bundle of Myrrhe is my Beloved unto me ——

IN this Verſe is ſhewed the reaſon why ſhe ſmelleth ſo ſweet; it is not from her ſelf, but from her Beloved, from whom ſhe hath this excellent Perfume; *My Beloved is a bundle of Myrrhe unto me.* Myrrhe was uſed in making the anointing Oyl, which made Perſons holy. Some ſay, the Myrrhe groweth in Eaſtern Countries, and that it is a certain ſhrub like unto a prickly Thorn, and bearing Flowers, having Seeds in them; out of which Seeds, there comes a certain Gum which is notable for ſmell; and alſo that the Flowers (the prickles being taken out) are excellent for ſmell, being made in a Poſey, or bound up in a bundle: *Exod.* 30. 23.

But whether it be a Bag, Bundle, or made in a Poſey, or the Gum of Myrrhe, it ſerveth to ſet forth the excellent ſweetneſs of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Now it muſt be noted here, that ſhe ſpeaketh of the Righteouſneſs of his Perſon, inherent in himſelf, and imputed through Faith, which Righteouſneſs ſhe hath in ſingular eſtimation; for ſhe ſingeth not here of his Righteouſneſs imparted, (although that ſhe hath alſo) but of his Righteouſneſs imputed, which is as ſweet to the broken hearted, afflicted, and humbled Soul, as the ſweeteſt Gum of Myrrhe, or as the Flowers of Myrrhe made into a Poſey. This bundle of Myrrhe (ſhe ſaith) my Beloved is unto me; ſo that when I am afflicted, in heavineſs, and great diſtreſs, the ſmelling to this Bag, Bundle, or Poſey of Myrrhe, yieldeth unto me a moſt fragrant ſcent.

——— *He ſhall lye all Night between my Breaſts.*

In theſe words is ſhewed the uſe of this Bundle, or Poſey of Myrrhe, it is to lye between her Breaſts, which words we muſt underſtand, otherwiſe the ſweetneſs of the Bundle will be utterly loſt.

Underſtand that by Night ſhe meaneth all times of Affliction, and fears of the Law, whether it be fear of wrath, of guilt, of want, of reproach and contempt of the World, or what-

whatſoever elſe may make the Heart heavy and ſad; in which condition are we, for whom this poſey is provided, commonly caſt into, not becauſe our Heavenly Father doth delight to afflict us, but becauſe without it we can never underſtand nor ſmell the ſweetneſs of the gum. Now what courſe doth ſhe take for the baniſhing of all fears and perplexities, out of her mind and conſcience in this night of diſtreſs? It is here anſwered, ſhe lodgeth Chriſt between her breaſts, ſhe holdeth him faſt by faith; and maketh application of his gracious promiſes, againſt all fears and diſcomforts whatſoever. And this is the true uſe of the goſpel. Therefore we muſt learn with the bride here, to be provided with this bag or bundle of *Myrrhe*, againſt the night of affliction cometh, that ſo when all things that make for our diſcomfort, will ſeem to be preſent, and thoſe things which ſhould comfort us will ſeem to be abſent, and nothing will appear before our eyes, but the remembrance of what we have done: yet then, by having this Heavenly poſey in a readineſs to ſmell to, the ſweetneſs of the gum may drive away all noiſom fumes out of our minds and conſciences. So wonderful a thing is faith, that when once it layeth hold on Chriſt, and lodgeth him within the Soul; all fears and doubts muſt vaniſh before it, even as the miſt before the Sun.

Verse XIV.

My beloved is unto me as a cluſter of Camphire in the Vineyards of Engedi.

IN theſe words the Church uſeth another ſimilitude to ſet forth the ſweetneſs of her beloved, which is by a cluſter of *Camphire*. The *Camphire* or *Cypreſs Tree*, is, (as ſome write) a Tree that groweth moſt commonly near-to the *Indian* Country, that beareth very ſweet and pleaſant fruit: But here the *Cipreſs Tree* is commended, that groweth in the Vineyards of *Engedi*; which was a City in the Land of *Jury* very fruitful, and in their Orchards they planted this Tree of *Cypreſs* or *Camphire*, which being in ſo fruitful a place, it was the notableſt fruit they had: So that as in our Land ſome fruit is more proveable then other fruit, ſo was this *Camphire* or *Cypreſs Tree* moſt fruitful of all others, in the Vineyards of *Engedi*. And to this fruit ſhe likeneth her beloved, which may alſo ſerve for a reaſon why he ſhall lie all night between her Breaſts, becauſe of the ſweetneſs of the fruit, that cometh by his death and Reſurrection.

Joſ. 15.

Which fruit ſhe likeneth to a cluſter, becauſe it bringeth all bleſſings to her for this life, and the life to come. And which groweth in the Vineyards of *Engedi*, to ſhew, that ſhe delighteth

delighteth in that fruit which groweth in the moſt fruitful Soil. She doth not boaſt of that righteouſneſs which is inherent in her ſelf, (although that ſhe hath alſo) but of that which is inherent in her beloved, as he is the ſubject of inherency.

Now it cannot be denyed, but that the righteouſneſs of Chriſt inherent in himſelf, and imputed to us, is infinitely of more worth, then that righteouſneſs which he doth impart, or communicate unto us, becauſe in all the works that Chriſt did, there was ſomething in them which was incommunicable to any Creature, which only made his own righteouſneſs of infinite worth in the ſight of his Father. Therefore ſhe likeneth her beloved to the fruit that groweth in *Engedi*, becauſe by his fruit alone, ſhe hath deliverance from ſin and the wrath of God.

VERSE XV.

Behold, thou art fair, my love, behold, thou art fair ——

THis is the ſpeech of Chriſt, who beholding his ſpouſe, declaring the uſe of her faith in the time of tribulation, commendeth her for the ſame, which ſheweth that he is well pleaſed. And the word [*behold*] ſheweth his willingneſs

ſhe

ſhe ſhould know it. And when he pronounceth her [*fair*] he meaneth free from the guilt of ſin. And when he ſaith [*my love*] he ſheweth that her perſon is accepted. And by the word [*thou*] he meaneth to exclude all thoſe that are not of faith, from ſhareing in the benefits of his Death and Reſurrection. Now the doubling of the words ſheweth, how hard it is for us, in the hour of Temptation, to apply our ſelves to the words of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: and alſo how willing the Lord Chriſt is, that then we ſhould not forget, but remember his loving and comfortable words. All theſe things are written that we might believe; and that when the hour of Temptation cometh, we ſhould put them into uſe and practiſe, otherwiſe we cannot poſſible pleaſe our head and Husband: who came into the world on purpoſe, and is aſcended into Heaven on purpoſe, that we might receive his benefits, and rejoice in the ſame.

——*Thou haſt doves eyes.*

Now that which he chiefly praiſeth the bride for, is the eye, as a thing which tendeth moſt of all to the ſetting out of her fairneſs, other parts draw not the affection, as doth the eye; therefore Chriſt chooſeth the eye to ſet forth the praiſe of his Church, which ſtandeth in a compariſon, *thou haſt doves eyes.* The doves eye is ſimple, harmleſs, is not crafty, ſeeketh

not

not greedily after a prey, doth not peck with the Bill, nor hurt any thing as other Birds do; but here it is chiefly uſed to ſet forth the chaſtity of the Bride, towards her Husband the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; who notwithſtanding all her afflictions, and temptations, chuſeth no other refuge to fly unto, but with the Dove, ſhe cleaveth faſt to her mate. And alſo the eyes are here commended, becauſe through faith ſhe killeth the Law, and liveth in the ſervice and freedom of her beloved, and doth good works freely and of choiſe.

VERSE XVI.

Behold, thou art fair, my beloved,——

THeſe are the words of the Church, wherein ſhe returneth the praiſe of all her beauty to her beloved, (who is fairer then the Sons of Men) from whom all her fairneſs is derived. She dareth not to appear before him in her ſelf, therefore prayeth him to behold his own fairneſs, as being the only cauſe of her acceptance in his ſight, which is a rule, and pattern for every man to imitate.

——*yea,*

——— *yea, pleaſant* ———

Thou art not only fair, but alſo pleaſant in thy ſelf, in the enjoyment of me, and pleaſant to me, in that thou ſpeakeſt ſo kindly to me, and accepteſt of me. Which words do ſhew us what manner of perſon Chriſt is, and what his carriage is to us, altogether pleaſant and lovely: So that as ſoon as ever we look upon him by faith, and humble our ſelves before him, *Eſa.* 62.2. he rejoyceth in us and over us, as the Bridegroom rejoyceth over the Bride.

Therefore when we are overwhelm'd with heavineſs and ſadneſs of heart, this doth not come from Chriſt; but from the Law and our evil conſcience, being not well purged and cleanſed of unbelief; for to thoſe that are humbled before him Chriſt is pleaſant.

——— *Alſo our bed is green.*

This is likely to be the joint ſpeech of Chriſt and his Church, rejoyceing together in the place of meeting, for the bed is the place either in publick or private, where Chriſt and his people meet together. And by the greens of the bed is meant the fruitfulneſs that cometh by reaſon of the meeting of Chriſt and his *Rom.* 7. Church, according to Saint *Paul*, being married to Chriſt, ye bring forth fruit unto God; that is, many Children unto glory. The

Goſpel

Goſpel is the Doctrine that converts the Soul, and the reaſon why ſo few are converted is, becauſe the Goſpel is ſeldom Preached; therefore the labours of the Miniſtry are not bleſt, but men are ſmiten with barrenneſs, become dead and withered Trees, bringing forth no fruit at all unto God, becauſe they want the company of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt in the bed; therefore it being ſaid [*our bed*] *Agar* the bondwoman is excluded from the priveledge of the bed, as one, who although ſhe hath many Children before men, yet ſhe hath none at all before God, and the reaſon is, becauſe ſhe entertaineth not Chriſt in the bed; ſhe imbraceth the ſervant, and forſaketh her Lord: therefore that heavy judgment ſpoken of by the Prophet *Eſay* follows in its time, the loſs of Children, and Widdowhood ſhall come upon thee in one day in their perfection. This is the heavy doom that will one day fall upon the bondwoman and all her Children; her bed being too ſhort, and the covering too narrow, to hide her from her ſin, and the wrath of God Almighty. *Eſa.* 47. 19.

Learn we therefore, that Doctrine which maketh the fruitful bed, and ſheweth the fruitful Mother, that is, ſo to underſtand the Law, as it may further us to faith in Chriſt, and ſo to underſtand the Goſpel, that it may further us in the duties of the Law.

This is a moſt rare and Heavenly Art, which none can teach but the Holy Ghoſt, let us therefore

therefore pray unto him without ceaſeing to beſtow this gift upon us; who hath promiſed to beſtow upon us all things that we ſhall aske which are according to his will. Then ſhall the bed become fruitful, then ſhall we rejoyce in the meeting place, and ſay with the bride here, our bed is alſo green.

Verse XVII.

The beams of our houſe are Cedar, *and our rafters of* Fir.

Now here is ſhewed the reaſon why the bed comes to be ſo fruitful, and how the family of God comes to be ſo much enlarged, it is by reaſon of the beams and rafters; which are the ſtrong ſupporters of all the building. Where firſt note, that by the houſe is meant the Church of God. And by the beams and rafters, the builders of the Church of God. And the beams being of *Cedar*, it ſignifies ſtrength, and alſo ſuch timber that will not rot, but is dureable and ſweet. Now the godly are often ſaid to be *Cedars*, and the chief in the Church are ſaid to be pillars. Alſo the houſe having rafters, it ſheweth it hath a covering or defence, and they being of Fir (which ſome think is another Tree call'd the

1 *Tim.* 3. 15.

Iſa. 44. 40.

Iſa. 20.

Brutint

Brutine Tree, which is of pleaſant ſmell) ſignifieth purity of Doctrine. Such beams and pillars, that are well verſed in pure Doctrine are always uſed in building the houſe of God in every age: therefore the bed is always fruitful, and the Church can never decay, becauſe the builders thereof are always laſting. And as it is a houſe very ſweet and pleaſant for a man to live in: So it is infinite in ſtrength, and for ſafety. It is therefore a vain thing for any man to think to undermine the Church of God, ſeeing it is a houſe built upon a Rock, and although men think to race it, and down with it even to the ground; yet he that ſits in the Heavens ſhall laugh, the Lord ſhall have them in deriſion. *Pſal. 2.* There may be ſome breaches made concerning the outward face, and proſperity of the Church, but her inward peace and glory can never be taken away.

And alſo ſeeing the houſe of God is for ſafety, it having a roof or covering, it is wiſdom for every man to get into it; that he may be ſafe from the Wind and ſtormy Tempeſts of the wrath of God.

Bleſſed is that man whoſe hope the Lord is, that ſetteth his confidence upon the gracious protection of the Almighty, he ſhall be guarded with Angels, and kept as the apple of his eye; the Lord will be a ſufficient defence unto him in life and death.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

VERSE I.

I am the roſe of Sharon, *and the lilie of the Valleys.*

THESE words are the voice of the bride, as appears by the Prophet *Eſay*, the deſert ſhall rejoyce and bloſſom as the *Roſe*; which words being ſpoken of the Church, it ſheweth the Church to be the *Roſe*.

Eſa. 35. 1.

And ſhe termeth her ſelf to be the *Roſe* of *Sharon*, not only becauſe *Sharon* of all places was moſt excellent for *Roſes*; but alſo becauſe it was prophecied that *Sharon* ſhould be a ſheepfold, that the Goſpel ſhould come to *Sharon*, and that Chriſt ſhould have his flock there.

Eſa. 65. 10.

And in that ſhe ſays, *I am the Lillie, it accordeth with the words of the Prophet*; I will be as the dew unto *Iſrael*, he ſhall grow as the Lillie.

Hoſ. 14. 5.

Now the Roſe is the Queen of flowers, ſurpaſſing all in beauty and ſmell; and the Lillie is next in Nobility to the Roſe, ſurmounting all in reſpect of her clothing, inſomuch that

Soloman

Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like the Lillie. And ſhe termeth her ſelf therefore to be the Roſe and the Lilly, in regard ſhe is moſt excellently perfumed, with the ſcent of her beloved; and alſo clothed with his righteouſneſs from the wrath of God.

She is alſo compared to the Lillie, in reſpect of the manner of her growth: for the Lillies labour not, neither do they ſpin, but only ſtand ſtill and receive the vertue of the ground from whence they grow. So the bride ſhe laboureth not, ſhe travaileth not in the works of the Law, to the end ſhe may attain true and eternal righteouſneſs thereby, but becometh a Lillie by ſitting ſtill by hearing and receiving the comfortable dew of the Goſpel. And in that ſhe is ſaid to be the Lilly of the valleys, it ſheweth from whence the Church ſpringeth, even from a low opinion of her ſelf; in that the Mountains of her own imaginations are become a valley: So that as the choiſeſt Lillies are found in the loweſt valleys, ſo the Lilly of Chriſt becomes decked with ſuch excellent ornaments, being firſt made low by ſitting in the deſert and ſolitary place. *Mat.6.28.*

Now it being ſaid, *I am the Roſe of Sharon, and I am the Lilly*, it muſt lead us into a further conſideration: for it is as much as to ſay, I am the faireſt flower in *Sharon*, I am the choiceſt Lilly there. Others there are in *Sharon*, that count themſelves the Roſe, and reckon themſelves the Lilly, but they ſpring

not out of the valley, are not perfumed with the ſcent of the Roſe, nor cloathed with the ornaments of my beloved.

For it muſt be noted, that *Sharon* is a ſheep-fold, in which fold there are two ſorts of people, a two fold Miniſtry or Mother; the free Mother which bringeth forth Children before God, free in Spirit, juſtified without the Law; and the ſervant or bondwoman, which bringeth forth no Children before God, but gendereth all her Children unto bondage. Againſt this Mother the bondwoman, the bride appropriates theſe Titles to her ſelf, I am the Roſe, I am the Lilly, and this I conceive to be the occaſion of her ſpeech. The bondwoman boaſteth her ſelf to be a Queen and no widdow, becauſe ſhe liveth (as ſhe ſuppoſeth) in the works of the Law, and alſo reproacheth the free Mother, becauſe ſhe forbiddeth juſtification by the Law; now becauſe ſhe boaſteth her ſelf in the Law, the bride here taketh away from her, all right and intereſt in Chriſt her Bridegroom, and although ſhe challengeth to her ſelf the Title; *as to be the only Roſe, and Lilly of Chriſt*, yet ſhe bloſſometh not, ſhe bringeth by her Doctrine no Children unto glory: therefore the bride ſays, [*I*] (notwithſtanding the boaſting of the bondwoman) *am the glory of Sharon*, I that am the free and fruitful Mother am the Lilly, for I only bloſſom and bring forth Children unto glory.

Eſa. 65. 10.

Rev. 18.

Eſa. 54. 4.

And

And by thus ſaying ſhe boaſteth not in her ſelf; but gloryeth only in the righteouſneſs of Chriſt her Redeemer.

Now the reaſon why ſhe bloſſoms, and comes to be ſo fruitful is, becauſe ſhe is married unto Chriſt. This is the reaſon given by the Prophet *Eſay*, (when he ſays, the wilderneſs ſhall rejoyce, and the deſert ſhall bloſſom as the Roſe) the glory of *Lebanon* ſhall be given unto it, the excellency of *Carmel* and *Sharon*; meaning Chriſt, who is the excellency of *Carmel* and *Sharon*, and the glory of all the *Cedars* in *Lebanon*, ſhall be given in Marriage to the deſart and ſolitary, to ſhe that is barren and fruitleſs in her own eyes. *Carmel* was a fruitful place where *Nabal* had poſſeſſions, and *Sharon* alſo was a fruitful field, and in *Lebanon* were many goodly *Cedars*; (figuring the Godly people in all ages of the Church) but take away the glory of *Lebanon*, and the excellency of *Carmel* and *Sharon*, that is to ſay, the righteouſneſs of Chriſt imputed, and their glory departeth like a Bird, and their fruit withereth and comes to nothing. *Eſa.* 35, 2.

After the ſame manner muſt we with the Bride, learn to hold faſt our Title againſt the bondwoman and her Children, who by their Doctrine bring forth all manner of Sects; and every Sect do claim unto themſelves the Title, as to be the only Roſe and Lilly of Chriſt: and condemn all others as *Antichriſtian*, that are not of their own way, and yet they boaſt

of nothing but of their own works. Now when this comes to paſs, we muſt learn with the Bride, to ſtrip them of their glory by the word of God. Becauſe ſhe boaſteth her ſelf in the Law, therefore we muſt ſhew unto her, her condemnation by the Law; and becauſe we are barren, and fruitleſs in our own eyes, and condemned by the Law, therefore muſt we lay faſt hold on the righteouſneſs of Chriſt our Lord, which is freely given unto us without the Law. If thou walkeſt according to this rule, then ſhalt thou become the faireſt flower in *Sharon*, perfum'd with the excellent ſcent of thy beloved, and the Lilly of the Valleys, cloathed and decked with his Ornaments; and alſo the ſcent of the Roſe, ſhall caſt forth an excellent ſavour in every place; and the ſmell of thy garments ſhall be as the ſmell of a field which the Lord hath bleſſed.

Verse II.

As the Lilly among thorns, ſo is my love among the Daughters.

These are the words of Chriſt, who firſt ſheweth the Church the danger ſhe is like to fall into by reaſon of her Doctrine, ſhe is like the Lilly among the thorns, in danger

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to be ſcrat, and torn in pieces: this acceptance ſhe findeth amongſt the daughters, meaning the Preachers of the Law, that draw on works into the Doctrine of juſtification, theſe in all ages have been the only enemies to the Bride of Chriſt: which did not fear to ſet upon Chriſt himſelf, but crucified the Lord of life; let any man but ſtick faſt to the righteouſneſs of Faith, and hold it forth againſt them in this one point concerning righteouſneſs by the Law, and they will ſhew themſelves; Firſt or laſt, *to be as thorns in his ſide.* And thus the Goſpel ſendeth fire on the earth, but without the Goſpel all things are at quiet.

Alſo Chriſt in theſe words preferreth the Children of the free-woman which he calleth his love: far above the Children of the bond-woman which he calleth the Daughters. For thus he ſaith in effect, that as the Lilly far ſurpaſſeth the thorns, both in Nobility and Beauty. So doth my love far ſurpaſs the Daughters, that is, is higher in my eſteem then thoſe that earneſtly require the works of the Law.

Next as it were an anſwer to this, follow the words of the Bride.

Verse III.

As the Apple-tree among the trees of the Forreſt, So is my beloved among the Sons ——

IN which words even as the Bridegroom before, did ſet forth the Bride beyond the Daughters of the bondwoman, under the ſimilitude of the Lilly: So here the bride doth ſet forth the excellency of her beloved, beyond the Sons of *Agar* under the ſimilitude of an Apple-tree. Now the Apple-tree far ſurpaſſeth the trees of the wood (which are by nature wild) in regard of the goodneſs of the fruit, and alſo the variety thereof: So doth the fruit *(ſhe ſays)* of my beloved far ſurpaſs the Sons, that is, the fruit of all thoſe that firſt require the works of the Law to be done, before a man can be intereſted in the Goſpel; this the ſpouſe of Chriſt cannot reliſh, becauſe it is not the voice of her beloved, and therefore ſhe hath the Sons in ſmall account, and betaketh her ſelf to her own Apple-tree, and feedeth on his fruit, the fruit of which tree doth heal the Nations.

——*I ſate under his ſhadow with great delight*——

By the ſhadow of the Apple-tree, underſtand the ſhadows and figures of Chriſt in all ages of the Church, which being rightly underſtood are full of heavenly delight. A ſhadow *(in Divinity)* repreſenteth ſomething to faith, which is abſent to ſenſe and reaſon; confirming that to the eye, which the word doth to the ear. For God hath always made a double Declaration of his bounty, for the comfort of ſinful man; the one is by his word wherein he inſtructeth us by hearing, the other by figures and ſhadows, wherein he inſtructeth us by ſeeing. And this comes to paſs by reaſon of our wonderful neceſſity and weakneſs, being not able to comprehend ſo excellent a myſtery as the Goſpel, without the uſe of viſible helps.

Therefore Chriſt inſtructing *Nicodemus* in the Doctrine of regeneration, teacheth him *Joh.* 3. by figures to underſtand the Myſtery. If I have told you of earthly things, and ye beleive not, how can ye beleive if I tell you of Heavenly things? As much as to ſay, unleſs you learn to believe by the knowledg of earthly things, ye cannot beleive if I tell you of Heavenly things.

Now by earthly things he meaneth the figures and ſhadows of Chriſt in all ages of the

Church; and begins with Baptiſm, the thing in queſtion then between Chriſt and *Nicodemus*. So alſo Circumciſion, the Paſſover, the Sacrifices, the Temple, the Tabernacle, the Ark, and the mercy Seat, were all earthly things by which the *Jew* was to be inſtructed in his faith.

Theſe were the patterns of things in the Heavens, to lead the *Jew* to the knowledg of Heavenly things themſelves. Now therefore, as ſhadows were neceſſary to inſtruct the *Jew* in his Faith, in a Chriſt that was to come: So alſo were ſome ſhadows neceſſary to inſtruct the gentile in his faith, in the Chriſt that is come. And therefore it was promiſed, *Eſa.* 4. that in the days of Chriſts Kingdom there ſhould be a Tabernacle for a ſhadow, which promiſe was fulfil'd in the coming of *John* the *Baptiſt*.

For all the Law and the Prophets propheſied until *John* the *Baptiſt*, that is till Baptiſm. Now all the Law and Prophets propheſied of a Chriſt to come: But Baptiſm manifeſteth unto *Joh.* 1.31. us the Chriſt that is come. Now ſeeing Baptiſm endeth that faith and Religion which reſteth in a Chriſt to come; therefore it beginneth that Faith and Religion which reſteth in the Chriſt that is come.

Mar. 1. And therefore it is ſaid by the Evangeliſt, *that Baptiſm is the beginning of the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt the Son of God:* Becauſe it endeth the former Propheſie of a Chriſt to come, and beginneth

beginneth that Faith and Religion, which reſteth in Chriſt that is come. And even as no man could viſibly profeſs the true Religion amongſt the *Jews*, unleſs he were firſt united to the *Jew* by Circumciſion: So no man can ſo much as profeſs the true Religion now, unleſs he be firſt united to the Church through Baptiſm.

And as it is the beginning of our entrance into the way of Chriſtianity: So it is the beginning of our comfort in the day of diſtreſs, for even as Chriſt was preſent with the Fathers of old, as ſoon as by faith they rightly underſtood the ſhadows; ſo Baptiſm as oft as we flv unto it by faith, hath Chriſt preſent with all that he is, and all that he hath prepared for poor ſinners. Which ſpiritual coming of Chriſt into the Soul; cauſeth the abſence of all diſcomforts whatſoever. The right underſtanding of this Miſtery, cauſeth the bride to ſing here, I ſate down under his ſhadow with great delight.

Alſo this Doctrine openeth a light for the conviction of all falſe Prophets whatſoever; all Sects and Hereſies that now be, or ever will be having their firſt riſe, from the contempt of Baptiſm, or ſome falſe opinion concerning the ſame.

And with this propoſition they all begin, that Baptiſm is nothing unleſs the perſon firſt believe. By which propoſition they wholy deny the true Chriſt, and reſt upon a falſe Chriſt.

Christ. For Baptism not only manifesteth the true Christ to become, (as hath been proved) but also sheweth us, that until Baptism, all people are under the Prophecy of a Christ to come.

Now that Doctrine which requireth faith before Baptism, requireth faith not in the true Christ that is come, but in a false Christ which is yet to come, which Christ in Scripture is no where to be found.

And if there be no such Christ to be found, which is yet to come; then there is no object to be found for such a faith to rest upon.

By which one argument, (if thou manage it skilfully) thou mayest easily send the former proposition to Satan from whence it came, and sit down and rest thy self in peace, and joy.

For one of these propositions must needs be granted, that either our faith must be in a Christ that is come, or else in a Christ that is to come; if in a Christ that is come, then *Joh.* 1.31. Baptism is necessary which manifesteth the same, if in a Christ to come, then is our faith and Religion ended, ever since the days of *John* the *Baptist*.

Learn thou therefore to be very cunning in the right use of the figure, that as Satan hath built up his Kingdom, by bringing Baptism into contempt; So thou mayest break his head, and batter his Kingdom in pieces, by teaching a right knowledg and understanding of the same;

ſame; then ſhalt thou be a right Souldier for thy beloved, and alſo with the bride here, ſhalt ſit down under his ſhadow with great delight.

——*His fruit was pleaſant to my taſt.*

That is, the fruit of his ſhadow, becauſe the ſhadow repreſenteth to us, the benefits of Chriſts death and Reſurrection; which muſt needs be pleaſant where the benefit is felt. But where there is no faith to underſtand and receive the myſtery in the ſhadow, to them they are of no uſe at all; but otherwiſe they are very pleaſant: for as much as they make the benefits of Chriſt which are repreſented, to be as certain to faith, as the figure repreſenting, is certain to ſenſe and reaſon.

VERSE IV.

He brought me to the banquetting-houſe——

HEre ſhe ſheweth the great proviſion that Chriſt made for her, when once ſhe grew to have a Sacramental faith, he entertaineth her with a Banquet. As Kings when they entertain their Queens do uſe to lead them into the Wine Cellar: *So doth the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*

Christ by his Queen, he bringeth her into his banquetting house, or house of Wine.

By the banquetting house, understand the place where the Church of God do use to meet together, whether in publick or in private; for the hearing and receiving of the Gospel. Which is said to be wisdoms feast, where the table is furnished with all manner of varieties, and nothing is wanting for this life or the life to come: there is comfort in all crosses, deliverance in all distresses, provision for all wants and necessities, pardon for all sins, healing for all iniquities, there is nothing that the heart of man can possibly stand in need of; but in this banquetting-house it is to be found.

Vr. 9.

And when she says, *hath brought* [*me*] she meaneth not idle and prophane persons, that scorn and contemn the word and Sacraments; the banquet is not provided for such, but I that feel my transgressions, and am wearied with the burden of the same, that am continually oppressed with heavines and sadnes of heart: I that do highly esteem and prize the Heavenly banquet, above all things under the sun, 'tis I for whom the delicates are provided. But by whom is she thus brought? She answereth, my beloved hath brought me, she did not come her self, but he out of his tender pity and merciful compassion brought her. Into this banquetting house he bringeth all those that earnestly and heartily desire the same, and that prize the provision that there is made above all earthly

earthly things, thoſe he feedeth with rich and Heavenly dainties, even with ſuch things as eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, nor ever entered into the heart of man to conceive: but thoſe that are ſcorners and contemners of the ſame, he ſendeth empty away, and none of thoſe ſhall ever taſt of his ſupper.

——*And his banner over me was love.*

The banner or ſtandard, ſignifies the Kings preſence in the field, and alſo it being a warlike ſign ſignifieth fighting with joy and victory. *Pſal.* 20 6. The uſe of the banner is when the Standard-bearer holds it up, to draw the Souldiers to march to it, that they may keep order, and attend upon their Colours: that the Battle be not diſordered. Now as the uſe of the Enſign is to draw Souldiers together, that they may march acccordingly: So is Chriſt banner to draw all his Souldiers to himſelf, that they may joyfully fight againſt the world, the fleſh, and the Devil. And as in all ages the Churches banners were the ſigns of Gods preſence: ſo have we alſo the ſignes of his preſence in the Sacraments, and by gathering to thoſe Enſigns, the love of God comes to be ſhed abroad in the heart, by which we joyfully fight againſt all our Spiritual enemies. Therefore thoſe that come not to their Colours, but forſake their Enſigns are blind and ſenſeleſs, and not only remain without the feeling of Gods love:

but

but alſo when they ſhould ſet themſelves in rank and order, to fight againſt the temptations of Satan, the wrath of God and Eternal death; they loſe their ſtrength with *Sampſon*, and fall down before the enemy. Therefore ſeeing our beloved hath placed us under his banner, we muſt March to it and attend upon our Colours; that ſo when the wrath of God, and the fear of Eternal damnation begins to ceize upon us, when the enemy comes in upon us like a flood, we may through faith behold; the ſpirit of the Lord to liſt up a ſtandard againſt him.

Then ſhall we feel by experience, that within us, which the bride here rejoyceth in, his banner over us to be love.

Verse V.

Stay me with flagons, and comfort me with apples, for I am ſick of love.

The bride having been in the banquetting-houſe, and there met with the fruit of her Apple-tree, which did ſo wonderfully comfort her in her afflictions, deſireth for more. She ſpeaketh to thoſe that beat the flagons; and carry the Apples to help her to ſome more, thoſe that often uſe the Wine Cellar, and have the

the banquetting cheer in a readineſs; to them ſhe ſays ſtay me *for I am even ready to ſink:* The bride is even overcome becauſe ſhe hath been in the Cellar: Others have no mind to the banquetting-houſe becauſe they never taſted of the Wine. The Church is not ſatisfied with one banquet, or one cup of Wine, but ſhe muſt have a flagon or two more, *ſtay me with flagons.* She findeth a continual need of the fruit of her Apple-tree, therefore ſhe muſt be continually comforted with Apples: others that ſee not their need care not a ruſh for the Wine-cellar, but ſeek for comfort in other things; but ſhe cryeth out *ſtay me with flagons, and comfort me with Apples.* Now ſhe ſheweth the reaſon why ſhe deſireth after the flagon ſo much, it is becauſe ſhe is ſick of love. To be ſick of love is to be reſtleſs till one hear good news from the Lover. Now Chriſt is her Lover, and ſhe having heard from him before, is even ſick till ſhe hear from her beloved again. It is as if ſhe had ſaid thus, I have been in my beloved's banquetting-houſe, where I have taſted of his dainties, and am even overcome with love, and can never be ſatisfied unleſs I taſt again and again.

And this effect the Goſpel worketh where ever it is received, it maketh all people ſick of love: And the reaſon why people have ſo little ſpiritual life and joy in them, it is for want of the Goſpel. Thoſe that know not the Goſpel wonder to ſee men run after Chriſt; but the

reaſon

reaſon is becauſe they are ſick of love, and can no more be without the Wine-cellar, then a hungry man can endure to be without meat. Next of all ſhe ſheweth the cauſe why ſhe is ſo much in love.

Verse VI.

His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me.

WHich words do ſhew the reaſon why ſhe is ſo ſick after her Lover, becauſe of his embraces. When ever ſhe meeteth him his left hand is under her head, and (after the manner of a Lover) his right hand doth embrace her.

Pſal. 45. By his right hand ſhe meaneth his Divinity, as may be gathered from the 45 *Pſalm.* And by his left hand his humanity. By his humanity he beareth all her ſins, ſorrows, and calamities, both of her head and whole man: and by his Divinity he worketh for her a full deliverance. By his left hand he taketh from her all things that make her miſerable; and by his right hand he gives unto her all things whatſoever, that may make her joyful and happy. When ſhe heareth of this in the banquetting-houſe, and begins to find and feel within her ſelf, that his

his heart is upon her, ſhe is ſick after him, and cannot chuſe but diſcover it. And thus it is with every man that hath once been in the Wine-cellar, and hath felt the ſweet embraces of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt in himſelf; he cannot but fall in love with him as the bride here doth.

Now next follow the words of Chriſt.

VERSE VII.

I charge you, O ye daughters of Jeruſalem, *by the Roes and by the Hindes of the field, that ye ſtir not up, nor awake my love until he pleaſe.*

CHriſt having heard his ſpouſe declare her faith before, and her Heavenly delight and reſt, that ſhe taketh in himſelf; chargeth the Daughters of *Jeruſalem*, (meaning thoſe that ſomething diſcent from the bride, concerning the way and manner of planting Chriſt in the Soul) not to moleſt her, or go about to unſetle her, in her Heavenly peace and ſecurity, until he himſelf pleaſe which is never. Alſo this charge implies a penalty if the charge be not obſerved. And here he mentioneth the example of the *Roes and Hindes*, which crea-

tures do dearly love one another; and are a ſimilitude between Man and Wife, and between Chriſt and his Church. And when he ſays that ye ſtir not up nor awake my love, it meaneth, by driving her from the Goſpel by conſtraint; or by infuſing evil principles into her, by a falſe interpretation of the Scripture.

Which is comfortable to us that belong to the Marriage-bed, when thoſe that exact the Law and works do accuſe and condemn us, for holding and maintaining juſtification by faith alone; againſt them all we muſt ſet this charge of our beloved: who commandeth their ſilence under the penalty of everlaſting woe. This to do is to make Jeſus Chriſt on our ſide, and if God be with us, who can be againſt us.

Verse VIII.

The voice of my beloved! behold! he cometh leaping upon the Mountains, skipping upon the Hills.

As ſoon as ever the bride had heard this charge againſt the Daughters, uttered by Chriſt; ſhe preſently breaketh forth into theſe words, the voice of my beloved. This voice of Chriſt no man knoweth, but he that pertaineth to the ſpiritual little flock; *there-*

fore

fore Chriſt ſaith, my ſheep hear my voice; others cannot diſcern it from the voice of *Moſes*, but the bride is well acquainted with him; and therefore as lovers have their ears liſtning after the voice of him whom they ſet their affections upon, ſo doth the bride here, *ſhe liſtneth to the voice of her beloved.* And thus it behoveth all that deſire to become the ſpouſe of Chriſt, to learn rightly to underſtand the voice of Chriſt: otherwiſe when the conſcience is in diſtreſs there is no comfort nor ſuccour to be found. For if thou makeſt no difference between Chriſt and the Law, when thy Conſcience wraſtleth with the Law, and the judgment of God, then thou art utterly undone for evermore; for then ſhall thine evil life appear before thine eyes, and (without this rule of diſtinction be learn'd) nothing ſhall be ſeen how thy ſinful conſcience ſhall be delivered, from the malediction of the Law, and the wrath of God. But Chriſt teacheth thee far otherwiſe, for after the Conſcience is humbled by the Law: he raiſeth it up again by faith without the Law. So that Chriſt maketh uſe of the Law to humble the ſinner: but totally layeth aſide the Law, in comforting the broken heart. *Joh.* 10.

But what is meant here by his leaping upon the Mountains, and skipping upon the Hills? *Queſt.*

By the Mountains are meant thoſe lets and hinderances, or ſtumbling blocks that were caſt in her way by the Daughters, to diſturb *Anſ:*

her in the Doctrine of juſtification by faith alone, to which Doctrine becauſe ſhe will not yeild, perſecution followeth in all ages of the Church, *therefore Cain killeth Abel, Iſhmael perſecuteth Iſaac, the Prophets are ſlain, and alſo Chriſt himſelf.* Now Chriſt cometh with great haſt, and alſo with great joy unto his bride, to throw down all thoſe ſtumbling blocks, that the way may be plain before her, and the paths made ſtraight: therefore he is ſaid to come leaping and skipping, and this being a thing of ſuch excellent uſe, as ſoon as ſhe preceiveth the hinderances removed, ſhe declareth it with joy, the very firſt ſight of his appearance in this thing, cauſeth her to burſt out the voice of my beloved, yonder he cometh, behold it is he. Now next of all ſhe ſetteth out this leaping and skipping by a ſimilitude.

Verse IX.

My beloved is like a Roe, or a young hart: behold, he ſtandeth behind our wall——

The *Roe* is a beaſt that delighteth to leap over buſhes, and skip over hills: and alſo the *Hart* is a nimble creature that skippeth over Mountains with a ſwift foot. Thus ſhe ſaith

ſaith, is my beloved: He maketh haſt to remove all ſtumbling blocks, that Salvation may come into my Soul, but there is ſomething in me that hindereth the coming in of Chriſt and Salvation, and that is a wall: So that when Chriſt cometh to the Soul to make it his Habitation, he findeth the door ſhut, and a wall to keep him out.

The wall here importeth ſomething of weight, as appeareth by the word [*behold*] I conceive that by the wall is meant, mans natural imagination, reaſon, or underſtanding, that he hath of the Scriptures, and of him ſelf which ſtandeth as a wall in man; in direct oppoſition to faith in Chriſt. For all men naturally are of this opinion, that God will juſtify thoſe that keep the Law morally, and reject the reſt: and to ſtrengthen this opinion many Scriptures are alleaged, with being not underſtood, this opinion is increaſed. Now until this wall be thrown down there is no entrance for Chriſt, therefore when the bride ſays, *he ſtandeth behind our wall*; ſhe meaneth to throw down the wall. Chriſt is as a lover that will come in, although the oppoſition be ever ſo great the walls muſt go down, and the houſe muſt be pulled in pieces, and a new foundation laid; So that a man would judge when Chriſt cometh that all were going to ruin, even then when he is about to lay a new foundation.

This oppoſition Chriſt findeth more or leſs, even in his own people while they are in this world, and therefore he ſtandeth behind the wall; and the firſt thing he doth by his Miniſtry is to throw down the wall: that is, thoſe imaginations in man, that are the roots and grounds of unbelief.

He doth not as (ſome other) builders do, prop up the old foundation, or piece up the old wall; but maketh all things new. And this
Num. 24. was prophecied of him in *Num.* 24. *he ſhall ſmite the corners of Moab, and caſt down the walls of all the ſons of Seth.*

——*Looking forth at the windows, ſhewing himſelf through the Lattice.*

Theſe words do expound the former, and ſhew the reaſon why the imaginations in man muſt be thrown down, it is that light may be in the Soul; For the windows and lattices are inſtruments to convey light into the houſe; and when there is any obſtruction between the light and the window it muſt be took away, otherwiſe the houſe will be dark.

Now Chriſt is our light and the underſtanding is the window of the Soul, and the firſt light that Chriſt bringeth, is by teaching a right underſtanding of the Law; and by throwing down mans natural opinion of the Law, by diſcovering of our original and actual ſin, by which

which we ſencibly feel that we are loſt; this is the firſt light and a matter of great weight, becauſe it teacheth man a true knowledg of himſelf; therefore it behoveth all people rightly to ſtudy the ſame, otherwiſe the windows will remain ſhut, and nothing but darkneſs will appear in the houſe.

VERSE X.

My beloved ſpake and ſaid unto me, riſe up my love, my fair one, and come away.

AFter the windows are opened by a right underſtanding of the Law, ſhe ſaith, *my beloved ſpake*, that is, of the promiſes of the Goſpel; *ſaying come away*, by which ſhe meaneth to receive his own righteouſneſs and merits. Nothing is here placed between the revealing of ſin, and giving of righteouſneſs but only faith in Chriſt. And when 'tis ſaid *riſe up*, it ſheweth, that the Law caſteth all men down, and that Chriſt is not delighted to ſee us too long in ſorrow and heavineſs. And ſeeing he ſaith *my love*, it ſheweth he owneth us in our ſorrows, and ſetteth his heart upon us. And in that he ſays *my fair one*, he taketh from us the guilt of all our ſins: and imputeth

to us his own righteouſneſs and merits. Theſe are the true foot-ſteps of faith, and are written on purpoſe, that we might upon the true ſight and confeſſion of our ſin, after the ſame manner, apply unto our ſelves the comfortable words in the Goſpel.

Verse XI.

For lo, the winter is paſt, the rain is over.

Here it is ſhown that ſo long as the Conſcience is under the Law, the feeling of Sin and the wrath of God, it is as the time of winter; wherein flowers and fruits do ſeem to be conſumed, by reaſon of Storms, and Tempeſts, and froſty nights. And as in the time of rainy weather, when little benefit of the Sun appears; for it is for the preſent as if there were no Chriſt or Saviour, when all former experiences of Gods love and favour are forgotten and loſt. Which condition no man can ſpeak effectually of, unleſs he have in ſome meaſure found it in himſelf. But as ſoon as the Conſcience is humbled, confeſſeth ſin and lifteth up through faith, his eyes and heart to the voice of his Redeemer, *the winter is paſt, and the rain is over.* All fears and doubts do

do then begin to vaniſh away. According to the ſaying of the Prophet, they ſhall hear of joy and gladneſs, and ſorrow, and mourning ſhall flee away. So that the Goſpel putteth an end to the Law in reſpect of the Conſcience; that Chriſt alone may there rule and govern. I ſay in reſpect of the Conſcience, (not in reſpect of the converſation, but) in removing the guilt of ſin and filling of it with peace and joy; for in ſaying the *winter is paſt*, it ſheweth us alſo, *that Summer is come.* All a mans life may be ſaid to be winter in reſpect of the fleſh, and the manifold ſins, vexations, cares, and dayly calamities, it is ſubject to in this mortal life; but in reſpect of the Conſcience it is ſometimes winter, and ſometimes Summer. Therefore no man muſt be too much caſt down with diſcouragement, when he feeleth his ſin and the wrath of God, as though the winter would never be paſt; nor yet be too much overcome with rejoicing, when the Goſpel ſhineth within him as though the rain would never come again. *Iſa.* 35. 10.

Verse XII.

The flowers appear on the earth——

THeſe are tokens of the ſpring, which cauſeth all people to rejoice when they behold the buds and bloſſomes of the herbs, trees, and flowers, when there is *(as it were)* a new face upon the Earth, when all things appear like a new Creation: which maketh all Creatures to rejoice and ſing. Which ſheweth the proper effects of the Goſpel, which is tidings of greater joy and gladneſs to all thoſe that by faith receive it. And therefore whatſoever Doctrine it be, that by the nature of its principles maketh the heart of man ſad, and cannot truly comfort it again; but leaveth it in ſadneſs is not the Doctrine of the Goſpel. By this then we may know when the Goſpel is taught, *when a Prophet ſpeaketh in the name of the Lord*; that is that ſays the Doctrine which he delivereth is the Goſpel, yet if the principles of his Doctrine do not nor cannot, produce that effect which the Goſpel worketh, which is righteouſneſs peace and joy in the holy Ghoſt; the Prophet ſpeaketh preſumptuouſly, his Doctrine is not the Doctrine of the Goſpel.

Deu. 18.

——*The*

——The time of the ſinging of Birds is come——

Another mark that the ſpring is come. Now as the pleaſantneſs of the ſpring is ſeen, by the cheerfulneſs of the Birds in their pleaſant notes: ſo the joyful and pleaſant news of the Goſpel is ſeen, and manifeſted in the voices and harmonies of men. Who even as Birds in time of ſpring; *So in their neſts do ſit and ſing.* Now in that it is here ſaid the time of the ſinging of Birds is come, we muſt note that a Chriſtian man liveth under a double time in this world; the time of the Law and the time of grace. A time when the voice of ſorrow and mourning muſt be heard; and a time when the voice of joy and gladneſs muſt only be heard, and ſorrow and mourning muſt fly away.

And *Solomon* being inſpired by the holy Ghoſt, treateth of both theſe times which every Chriſtian muſt apply himſelf diligently to learn. No man muſt think the Goſpel to be ſuch a Doctrine, that bringeth with it nothing but pleaſure; for it being contrary to the Doctrine and Religion of the World, it bringeth the croſs and many tribulations where the true Goſpel is taught. And when the fear of any judgment, guilt, or calamity; begins to ſeize on the mind and to overwhelm it, then doth the time of the Law begin, and holdeth

us in captivity, which time doth not always laſt to the Godly, but only till Chriſt, for as ſoon as we confeſs our ſin, and make application of the promiſes of God, then doth the Law begin to vaniſh from the Conſcience; and then the time of the *ſinging of Birds is come*, as the holy Ghoſt here writeth.

——*The voice of the Turtle is heard in our Land.*

The *Turtle* uſeth (as ſome ſay) to depart out of the Land of *Jury* in winter by reaſon of the cold; and to return again in ſpring for to make an abode, in which time her voice is only heard calling to her mate. So that the voice of the *Turtle* is a certain ſign that the ſpring is come. So when we hear the *Nittingale*, the *Thruſh*, the *Black-bird*, and other harmonical voices and pleaſant notes; we know the ſpring is come. Now as the voice of the *Turtle*, and the chirping of other Birds; do ſhew unto us that Summer is come: So alſo we know that the Goſpel is come when the voice of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is heard amongſt the Saints. For as the warmneſs of the ſpring, cauſeth a cheerfulneſs amongſt the Brids: So doth the truth of the Goſpel (being rightly underſtood) cauſe a cheerfulneſs amongſt the Saints, which cauſeth all the Heavenly hoſt to break out in ſinging, lauding, and praiſing the Lord. When once they begin to ſhake off

the

the winter, and the froſt begins to melt, and their hearts begin to be warmed with the ſpirit of God: then they begin to ſet their voices in Tune, and with ſweet and Heavenly deſcant to make melody to the Lord in their hearts. When this comes to paſs then is the *voice of the Turtle heard*, and then the Summer is come. Then the *Nightingale* ſingeth and all the Birds of Heaven begin to chirp.

They that have nothing in their mouths but ribaldry and filthineſs, that can talk of nothing but couetouſneſs and greedineſs; ſhew no tokens at all of the ſpring, neither can ſuch make any Muſick at all to the Lord. Therefore let us learn rightly to underſtand the voice of the *Turtle*; that we may have this heat of affection within us, *and ſo lively a feeling of the Lords mercies, that we may ſing forth the praiſes of the Lord, and ſhew the Turtle to be amongſt us, and that the ſpring is come:* that ſo by our ſpiritual and Heavenly joy begun in this life, we may give a glymps of that everlaſting joy, which one day we ſhall have with the Lord in glory.

VERSE

Verse XIII.

The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good ſmell——

THe vine and the fig-tree do alſo note the ſpring, eſpecially in *Jury* where the Country is hot, and the ſpring comes ſooner (then with us) to make the earth fruitful. Both theſe Trees bear pleaſant fruit, eſpecially (as ſome ſay) thoſe about *Libanus*. And as their fruit is pleaſant to the taſt, ſo the tender grapes when they firſt ſhoot out and bloſſom; give a good ſmell, chiefly in hot Countrys where the Sun hath greater force then elſe where, in cauſing nature to thruſt forth her ſweetneſs.

This ſheweth that where the Goſpel cometh it maketh men fruitful: for the godly are not compared to Trees that bring forth no fruit, (when once God pardoneth the imperfections and blemiſhes of his Church) but to Trees that bring forth moſt ſweet and pleaſant fruit. Thoſe that bring forth no fruit in their converſation, *but ſower grapes are not the Lords plants: but are degenerated from the true vine*. And they whoſe Doctrine, (by reaſon of the nature of its principles) bringeth no Children unto glory,

are

are not the Lords fig-trees: but are like brambles, thorns and thiſtles, that ſcratch and prick the Church, but bring forth nothing that is ſweet and pleaſant, *theſe ſerve for nothing but to be cut down and caſt into the fire.*

Therefore we muſt learn to taſt of the ſweetneſs of the fig-tree and the vine, and to ſhew forth the fruits thereof, that we may give a teſtimony that the Goſpel is come; which when once we have well taſted of, we will not loſe the ſweetneſs of it for a world.

When the Trees went out to chuſe them a King, the fig-tree would not loſe his ſweetneſs for a Kingdom. Nor would the vine loſe his pleaſant wine that cheared God and man for a Kingdom. If once we had but taſted the fruit of the vine and of the fig-tree; and did rightly know the uſe thereof, we would not part with it for all the pleaſures under the Sun. *Judg. 9.*

Although the grapes be not fully ripe, we muſt not be diſmayed, and the figs but green and ſmall, yet the Lord taketh pleaſure in them; and counteth our poor beginnings to be tokens of the ſpring. If we humble our ſelves before him for our frailties and weakneſſes, and aske him forgiveneſs for the ſame, he looks upon us with gracious eyes and telleth us that Summer is come. When we are aſhamed of our fruit, and begin to be diſmayed and hang down our heads like a bullruſh; yet then doth he ſpeake friendly and comfortable words unto us, as appeareth in the words next following.

——*Ariſe*

——*Ariſe my love my fair one and come away.*

Which words are the concluſion of what was ſpoken to the bride by her beloved, and it is the ſecond time by which ſhe is call'd upon to come away.

Now in that he calleth again, it ſheweth how untractable the Soul is to come out of her miſſery and affliction, ſo wicked a thing is unbelief, which ſetteth nothing before our eyes in the time of tribulation, but only this that God hath no reſpect unto us; but that he is about wholly to caſt us of. Now becauſe there is no cure for unbelief but only faith, and faith can have no footing but only from truth; therefore our beloved in theſe words openeth his good heart unto us, and telleth us the very truth that we are his love, his fair one.

He that can make uſe of theſe words in time of Temptation, and can perſwade himſelf that they are ſpoken unto him, ſetting himſelf to prayer in good earneſt; for the eſtabliſhing of this very truth in his Soul, ſhall eaſily overcome his unbelief, and experimentally feel the benefit of faith.

And alſo Chriſt here declareth unto us, how willing he is that we ſhould receive him. He ſpeaketh not one word of diſcomfort to the afflicted Conſcience, as *Satan* by his inſtruments doth;

doth, as the Law doth or as the accuſing Conſcience it ſelf doth; but biddeth us ariſe and come away; that is, not to hearken to thoſe diſcomforts, but to ſet our faith and affections upon his words; whereby he doth only and wholly appropriate us to himſelf.

For when he ſaith my love, he doth it to aſſure us of the contrary to that which in time of diſtreſs we moſt of all fear, which is, that we are not beloved. And when he ſays my fair one, he taketh that away from us which cauſeth us to queſtion his love *(that is to ſay)* the guilt of all our ſins. And what can diſcomfort us in Heaven, Earth, or Hell, when God which is greater then all things doth aſſure us that he loveth us and hath forgiven us all our ſins.

VERSE XIV.

O my dove! thou art in the clefts of the Rock——

THE Church having made rehearſal of the ſweet & comfortable words of her beloved, Chriſt here ſpeaketh again and commendeth her in that ſhe is in the clefts of the rock. And firſt he calleth her his dove, which hath many excellent properties to which the bride is re-

ſembled; which are not ſo much reſpected in this place as this one thing is, in that ſhe delighteth to make her neſt in the Rock, that ſhe may be ſafe from the prey of the Hawk and other devouring Birds. Now as the dove delighteth to be in the cleſts of the Rock, that ſhe may be ſafe from devouring fowls when they make wings after her: *So the dove of Chriſt delighteth alſo to hide her ſelf in a place of ſafety, when ſhe is hunted after by an accuſing Conſcience, the wrath of God: the malice of Satan, or any of his inſtruments. And this hiding place is in the cleſts of the Rock, and for this ſhe is commended.*

Some ſay that God is the Rock, and that the Eternal Councel and Decree of God is the cleft, wherein the dove of Chriſt is in ſafety, and that's one hole.

And then there is the providence of God, by which many times he maketh way for the dove to eſcape, that they make to be another cleft.

Cer. 10. 4. But that I moſt think on is this. *The Rock is Chriſt.* But then the Rock muſt open and divide, elſe how can there be a cleft for the dove to get in? Underſtand then by the cleft a right diviſion betwixt Chriſt and the Law, when the Conſcience is in diſtreſs; which diſtinction thou muſt learn to make by faith. For when the Law putteth thee in fear juſtly by reaſon of thy ſin, if thou humbleſt thy ſelf by faith thou killeſt the voice of the Law, and

makeſt

makeſt the cleft: but if thou lookeſt upon the Law (in that time after thou haſt humbled thy ſelf and asked forgiveneſs) to be the voice of Chriſt, thou makeſt no cleft, thou canſt have no hiding place, to keep thee ſafe from fear. Make this account therefore with thy ſelf, that the Law is crucified, dead, and condemned unto thee, (in reſpect of the Conſcience) as ſoon as thou humbleſt thy ſelf, and by faith layeſt hold upon Chriſt; then thou makeſt a right diviſion betwixt Chriſt and the Law, and hideſt thy ſelf in the cleft of the Rock ſo that if the Hawk, or other devouring fowls do wing after thee, to hanch upon thee; thou ſitteſt in ſafety from fear of evil, and it is but loſt labour for *Satan*, or any of his inſtruments to endeavour thy ruin.

For want of this knowledg many peoples hearts do ſhake, when they are like to be made a prey by ravenous Birds, and the Law and fear of Gods wrath begins to ſeize on the Conſcience, they are even at their wits end, being wholly diſmayed. Theſe are not in the cleft. But the bride of Chriſt that rightly underſtandeth theſe things, as ſhe preſumeth not upon her own worthineſs; So neither is ſhe diſmayed at her unworthyneſs, but ſitteth in the cleft of the Rock with *Moſes*, where by faith ſhe beholdeth the back parts of God, condemning her for ſin: and by the ſame faith ſhe heareth proclaimed to her, his merciful and gracious name. *Ex.* 33. 22.

——In the ſecret places of the ſtairs——

There are certain craggy places in Rocks that ſtand out like ſtairs, by which the dove geteth up into her hole. After the ſame manner the Church of Chriſt aſcendeth by certain foot-ſteps of faith, to a communion with Chriſt in this life; and to a perfect communion with him in the life to come.

Theſe are ſaid to be ſecret places, becauſe the righteouſneſs of faith by which we aſcend to this communion, is ſecret and unknown to man's reaſon: for it conſiſteth in the deſtroying of the grounds of unbelief, which is the mother and root of all ſin, and the bane of all Chriſtian and holy duties. It ſheweth a man (from the nature of its principles, how to love God and keep his Commandments) how to behold ſuccour and help to be near in time of tribulation, when no help nor ſuccour is ſeen or perceived.

All which things are fooliſhneſs to reaſon, yet are the foot-ſteps and track of all the flock of Chriſt gone before.

——*Let*

——*Let me ſee thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for thy voice is ſweet, and thy countenance is comely.*

That is, I would have thee to countenance my Doctrine and manner of teaching againſt all oppoſers; without being abaſhed or diſcouraged, for the deſtruction of Antichriſt, and the whole Kindom of *Satan:* this countenance we ought to ſhew to our friend.

And when he ſaith, let me hear thy voice, it meaneth, that the true Goſpel be Preached to poor ſinners; and that we call upon the name of God (by prayer in Chriſts name in the day of trouble) in faith with fervency; that we may receive help and deliverance from him, which is very ſweet and delightful to Chriſt Jeſus, and is that joyful voice and comely countenance, which is here commended by him.

VERSE XV.

Take us the foxes, the little foxes that ſpoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes.

NOw here it is ſhewed that one ſpecial, and principal means for the preſerving of this

kind of righteouſneſs in the Church, is to take *the foxes:* for they *ſpoil the vines.* Some write of the foxes, that they make holes in the roots of the vines, and that by undermining the root; the root withers and the vine ſtarves. Others ſay that the fox having venemous teeth, faſtneth his teeth in the rind of the vine, and ſo ſpoils the vines. And that ſometimes alſo by bruiſing the young ſprigs and ſhuts, they ſpoil the vines. But they that have vines, and are much troubled with foxes know beſt the truth of this. But this is certainly known that the fox loves grapes, and when they are ripe makes great ſpoil of them; and by ſpoiling the grapes doth much hurt to the vines.

By the foxes are principally meant falſe Prophets. *Here O Iſrael thy Prophets are like the* Exod. 34. *foxes in the deſerts.* And the injunction here is to take them. And the reaſon why they muſt be taken is, becauſe they ſpoil the vines, meaning the fruit of the vines, the righteouſneſs of both Tables. And alſo becauſe the vines have tender grapes, meaning the young vines whoſe fruit is tender; and the fox being famous for ſubtilty, will endeavour to ſpoil thoſe firſt, chiefly if he grow to be a *Reynald* an old *Fox*, therefore the injunction here is to take the little foxes the young cubs, for they alſo ſpoil the vines. This charge is given by Chriſt, the perſons to whom, is to the Magiſtrate and Miniſter. The Miniſter is to diſcover the foxes;

foxes; and the Magiſtrate to puniſh them with the ſword.

Now that the foxes may be taken, their holes muſt be known, for the foxes have holes and in their holes they hide themſelves; and the firſt work the fox doth when he comes into the vineyard, is to make his hole, now the foxes hole is the righteouſneſs of the Law; he extolleth the righteouſneſs of works far beyond the righteouſneſs of faith; this he makes a great ſhew of, preſſeth very earneſtly and ſeems to walk in very ſtrictly, that ſo if any fault be found with his Doctrine, he may cover it and hide it under the character of an honeſt man. So that his firſt and principal work in ſpoiling the vines, is to deſtroy the righteouſneſs of both Tables; under a pretence of requiring ſtrictneſs and holineſs of life Therefore mark it, that when ever the fox cometh whether it be an old Reynald or a young Cub, by the firſt principles of his Doctrine, he magnifieth and extolleth a ſuppoſed righteouſneſs in man; far beyond the righteouſneſs of Jeſus Chriſt imputed, and by ſo doing he ſtrengtheneth in man a more honourable opinion of himſelf; then of the works and righteouſneſs of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt: and ſo he taketh away and ſpoileth the righteouſneſs of the firſt Table, which is faith in Chriſt.

By the firſt principle in Doctrine underſtand the firſt ground, that is, layed to encourage thee to believe in Chriſt.

Next he alſo ſpoils the righteouſneſs of the ſecond Table, which is true love towards men, for the root and foundation of love towards

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men; is Gods love towards us apprehended by faith, for no man can exerciſe himſelf in ſhewing true love towards men, until his own heart be firſt warmed with the apprehenſion of Gods love towards himſelf, which the fox by his ſubtilty wholly deſtroyeth, for where the root and foundation of charity is plucked up; there charity which is the fruit muſt needs be blaſted and wither away. And thus the foxes ſpoil the vines. And this is the meaning of Chriſt when he ſays, *by their fruits ye ſhall know them*, meaning ſuch fruits as ſpring from the principles of their Doctrine. *Mat.* 7.

Now when the foxes hole is known, the fox is taken, for then he is diſcovered to all to be the fox. Therefore if thou wilt hunt the fox, ſo as to take him, be ſure to drive him into his hole; for there he lurketh, and there thou ſhalt be ſure of him. All people that pertain to the vineyard ought to be careful in this thing: eſpecially thoſe that watch for Souls; for the fox cometh not in jeſt, but to ſpoil vines, to eat and conſume the tender grapes: to deſtroy the righteouſneſs of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that no man may have Salvation by him. And is it not time then for every man to look about him? It is not for nothing that ſo ſtrict a charge (as puniſhment by death) is given in *Deut.* 18. and *Deut.* 13. *againſt thoſe that ſpeak in the name of other Gods.*

Therefore when the wild boar comes with his tusk and ſnout, as if he did think to pull down

down God out of his Throne; or the fox by ſubtilty, let every man put to his ſhoulder, that they may be taken and deſtroyed. The lamentable miſery that is fallen upon us for want of care herein, is found by woful experience.

VERSE XVI.

My beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the Lillies.

THE Church perceiving the care of her beloved in taking the foxes, that her righteouſneſs might be preſerved, and that ſhe might have Salvation: makes this concluſion to her ſelf, *my beloved is mine.*

By which ſhe makes a right uſe of the Goſpel, which is to aſſure and make us bold of our faith. This bond or conjunction being ſo near as the head and members, or the vine and branches, cauſeth her to rejoice; *my beloved is mine, and I am his.*

This right and propriety in Chriſt as Mediator, wicked men have not, Angels need not, therefore ſhe claimeth the Title wholly to her ſelf. And this ſhe maketh more account of then of all the world. She eſteemeth more of him, then of all things beſides in Heaven and Earth.

Earth. In him she findeth a sufficient reconciliation made with the mighty God, for all her sins: in him she is made the heir of Eternal glory.

And she is also comforted in this, in that her beloved doth not only preserve her from unwholsome pastures; but also feedeth her in good pastures. *He feedeth among the Lillies. My beloved* (she saith) *is a Shepherd, and hath a flock, and feedeth his flock like a Shepherd in sweet pasture; which is good feeding being among Lillies, for the Lillies shew not that the Sheep eat Lillies: but the goodness of the ground where the Lillies grow.* So that where Christ feedeth nothing can be wanting. *The Lord is my Shepherd* (saith *David*) *therefore I shall want nothing.* Psal. 23. He provideth fatlings, wine and all delicate things: So that all that love his pasture shall be well fed, and prove well. The reason why men prove so little is because they distast the pasture where Christ feedeth. When sheep feed in good pasture, settle in it and like it well, they feed and come forwards apace: but when the pasture is bad or they distast it they hunger, bane, and starve.

Some feed upon their own imaginations, and mans inventions, and such as their food is; So they be themselves, they never come amongst the Lillies, therefore never tast of the sweetness of the pasture. Therefore let all those that desire to be proveable, frequent the place where Christ feedeth; and then shall their life

savour

ſavour of his wiſdom. Seeing Chriſt hath provided ſuch excellent paſtures for us, as to feed among Lillies, let us feed there and ſo feed; that we may be fit for himſelf, and to receive Eternal glory.

VERSE XVII.

Until the day break, and the ſhadows flee away; turn my beloved, and be thou like a Roe, or a young Hart upon the mountains of Bether.

THe words are a prayer of the Church, wherein ſhe deſireth Chriſt to turn to her all night, *even till the break of day.* By the break of day is meant the ariſing of the day-ſtar in the heart, or coming of Chriſt into the Conſcience; and alſo his laſt coming in the morning of the Reſurrection. And by ſhadows underſtand ſin, and all manner of tribulation, which are call'd ſhadows of death, by which the comforts of a mans life are oftentimes eclipſed. By the flying away of the ſhadows is meant, the removeing of all fears out of the mind, by the ſpiritual coming of Chriſt: and the total vaniſhing of all ſhadows by the morning of the Reſurrection. Then comes the joyful Summers morning, when all the Birds of Heaven

2 *Pet.* 1. 19.

Pſal. 23.

Heaven ſhall rejoice and ſing for evermore. Here the Church ſiteth in miſery and darkneſs, but then comes the breaking of the day of all conſolation, and the expelling of all miſery and darkneſs for evermore. Therefore ſhe prayeth her beloved to turn to her with his ſweet embraces, and to feed her among Lillies until that time come; *and prayeth him to be like a Roe, or a young Hart upon the Mountains of Bether*, to come ſpeedily to her (upon all occaſions) like thoſe nimbler creatures.

Bether ſignifies diviſion, and is (as ſome ſay) the place call'd *Bithron* which was divided from the plain of *Jericho*, and the land of *Gilead* (*where the battel was fought between the houſe of David, and the houſe of Saul*) by the River *Jordan*. Now ſins, reproaches, and calamities are like Mountains, which ſeem to make diviſion between Chriſt and the Soul until they are removed, therefore in regard the Church is oftentimes oppreſſed with ſuch calamities, inſomuch that ſhe is ſcarcely able to bear up her head and heart, therefore ſhe prayeth Chriſt to make haſt, and to be like the nimble Roe, or the skipping Hart in coming to her upon all occaſions, for the removing of them; leſt for want thereof, there ſhould ſeem to be (*in regard of her own feeling and apprehenſion*) an Everlaſting diviſion between them.

2 *Sam.* 2. 29.

CHAR

CHAP. III.

VERSE I.

By night on my bed, I ſought him whom my Soul loveth: I ſought him but I found him not.

THIS is the continued ſpeech of the Church, who after ſhe was well inſtructed in the uſe and practiſe of faith; She loſt on a ſuddain, through her own negligence, the ſenſe and feeling of her beloved, and fell into moſt grievous and bitter afflictions. And not to reject but omitting other interpretations of this place, I underſtand it principally to be meant of outward croſſes and calamities of all ſorts; eſpecially when ſhe could not ſee, nor by any means underſtand which way the promiſes of God ſhould be fulfill'd unto her in reſpect of outward things. A condition which many of thoſe that are truly Godly, are *(for the tryal of their faith)* ſubject to fall into, in this miſerable World. This is very probable, as I humbly conceive, to be the meaning of this place, as will better appear by the words in the following Verſes. And there-

fore

fore underſtand it thus. *By night on my bed.* When I was in great affliction and miſery, and when I had moſt leaſure to meditate on my own condition. *I ſought him whom my Soul loveth.* I diligently look'd about to ſee whether I could find the way, by which my beloved would provide for me and mine: for he hath made me many great and precious promiſes of all good things, not only for my ſpiritual, but alſo for my temporal condition; and I earneſtly and diligently ſought, how or by what means thoſe promiſes were likely to be accompliſhed: this I earneſtly ſought for, *but I found it not.* So that my beloved ſeemed to have forgotten to be gracious, and to have caſt of all care and love of me.

This is a great and wonderful tryal of faith, when all things are promiſed, and nothing ſeems to be performed: when the things that diſcomfort us are preſent, but all things that ſhould comfort us are abſent; in this condition are we full heavy and ſad. This giveth a wonderful blow to faith, when we behold thoſe that have no fear of God before their eyes, to live in wealth and proſperity; and thoſe that truly fear him to live in penury and want; This hath bred a wonderful temptation in the Godly in all ages, and in this condition muſt we be content to live in, and not deſpair of help when it is ſo; for the bride here ſought him ſtill, although for the preſent ſhe found

him

him not. But mark what courſe ſhe reſolveth on next.

VERSE II.

I will riſe now, and go about the City in the ſtreets and broad ways, I will ſeek him whom my ſoul loveth; I ſought him but I found him not.

THe Church ſitteth not ſtill in this condition expecting to be fed of Angels, or to have bread rain down from Heaven: *but riſeth and goeth about the City:* She goeth amongſt thoſe people that pertain to the viſible Church that have ſome ſhew of godlineſs in them, ſuch as are moſt likely to help her in the day of her extremity.

And alſo into the ſtreets and broad ways; that is, into ſuch places where ſuch men uſually meet together, there ſhe was driven to open her caſe, and make her condition known: there ſhe alſo *ſought her beloved, ſhe ſought him but ſhe found him not.* This then being marked out to be the condition of the Church, no man muſt take offence at his beloved, if he pleaſe to exerciſe his faith this way: if he drive him into neceſſity, caſt him into a condition of penury, and want of outward neceſſaries, wherein

2 Chron. 32. 6. Neh. 8. 1. 3.

wherein of neceſſity he muſt make known his caſe in the ſtreets, yet no man muſt be offended in this condition: although he ſtand in need of help, and no man helpeth, but in ſtead of receiving ſuccour, he undergo reproach, yet I ſay no man muſt be diſcouraged; for Chriſt himſelf made himſelf poor, that he might know by experience, how to ſuccour us in a poor condition, and ſometimes alſo will make his members poor, that they alſo by experience may learn to pity thoſe that are poor.

He doth not ſend his ſpouſe into the ſtreets becauſe he wanteth love or power to help her, but to make her comformable to his own condition; and that ſhe may taſte in part of that cup, which he himſelf hath perfectly taſted of, and be Baptiſed with the Baptiſm that he was Baptiſed with: that ſo ſhe being made partaker of his afflictions here, ſhe may rejoyce with him, with joy unſpeakable and full of glory hereafter.

Neither doth he caſt her down, becauſe he doth not mean to lift her up again; but that ſhe may ſee him creating all things out of nothing, providing help and deliverance for her by ways and means, contrary to mans reaſon and imagination. But mark what befel the Church in this condition.

VERSE III.

The watchmen that go about the City found me——

BY watchmen here we are not to underſtand the Miniſters of the Goſpel, although they are frequently called watchmen in Scripture. But thoſe watchers that do continually watch to ſee the people of God in miſery; and to declare the ſame in in the ſtreets of the City with great rejoycing. Theſe are *Satans* watchmen, who in managing the affairs of his Kingdom, doth imitate our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; *Iſa. 21.* for even as when judgments were threatned againſt the enemies of Gods Church, it was in a viſion declared unto the Prophet, under the ſimilitude of a watchman, ſtanding whole days and nights on the watch Tower, to deſcry the coming in of the enemy upon thoſe that had afflicted the people of God, and to declare what he ſaw for the comfort of the Godly: *Ver. 6.* So *Satan* by way of imitation, hath alſo watchmen that ſtand continually upon their watch, on purpoſe to eſpie the calamities that are coming upon the people of God, and to declare it in the ſtreets of the City, and in the broad ways (where men uſually meet together) with great rejoycing, for the diſcomfort of the Godly. Theſe are the watchmen here ſpoken

of, which *Satan* hath in every corner, these are
Num. 13. 22. like the spies that were sent into the Land of *Canaan*, that brought an evil report upon the Land; that sit in the lurking places of the
Psal. 10. 8. 9. villages to murther the inocent, that lie in wait secretly as a Lion in his Den, to catch the poor, of such *David* complains of when he says, they watch for my halting, and of those that
Psal. 35. 15. gathered themselves together, and rejoyced in his adversity: and in another *Psalm*, they take councel together, they whisper and devise my hurt. These are the watchmen that *Satan* sendeth into the streets, to declare what they see, to the discomfort of the Bride, and to cast her (as much as in them lies) into everlasting reproach.

This breedeth a wonderful temptation in the godly, and is the greatest tryal of faith that may be, when in stead of shewing pity and compassion, the enemy shall laugh and cry aha, this is the day that we looked for, lo we have seen it. These be the watchmen that found the poor Church in this condition; which in stead of ministring any comfort to her in her distress, did add affliction to the afflicted.

These watchmen must we expect to meet with, who in stead of comforting, will use all means to hinder us from help and succour; by casting us into reproach and covering us with contempt, yet we must not be one jot dismayed, but pray with *David*, Lord rescue my Soul from their

their deſtructions. For although they hold a Counſel together, whiſper, and make bold to propoſe the time of our downfal and utter ruin, yet ſhall the promiſe of God prevent them all: for it was but a little that the Bride paſſed from theſe, but ſhe found him whom her Soul loved. But mark here what ſhe ſaid to theſe watchmen.

——*To whom I ſaid, ſaw ye him whom my Soul loveth?*

It is not ſaid here, that the watchmen ſaid any thing to the Bride, yet in *Song* 5. 7. 'Tis ſaid, they ſmote her and wounded her, that is, behind her back, with reproachful words, and diſgraceful terms.

This ſhews what manner of people the watchmen here ſpoken of were, ſuch as could belch out with their mouths; and had ſwords in their lips to ſlay the upright in heart: but this their miſchief was not open, but privily and ſecretly done? But what doth the Bride ſay to theſe watchmen? To whom ſhe ſaid, *ſaw ye him whom my Soul loveth?* Which is not to be underſtood ſo much of any private conference, as by her ſpeaking to them in the Miniſtery when ſhe came into the ſanctuary of God. For the watchmen reproach the Church becauſe of her ſins and afflictions, and will ſcarcely afford her the title of bride; becauſe of her ſtains and blemiſhes: therefore the bride

telleth them here they ſin againſt the Goſpel, and ſhe dealeth very plainly, ye never ſaw him whom my Soul loveth. The Goſpel breedeth in men pity and compaſſion, a willingneſs to think the beſt, to ſpeak the beſt of all men, to cover and hide tranſgreſſions to help thoſe that are in diſtreſs and miſery: theſe things the watchmen never learn'd, and being in proſperity themſelves they ſpeak loftily, and their tongues walk through the earth. Therefore ſhe telleth them this. Ye have no knowledg of Chriſt, ye never ſaw him whom my Soul loveth.

So that although theſe watchmen of *Satan* are high and lofty in their own eyes, and having more then heart can wiſh, do Lord it (outwardly) over the bride, yet in the ſanctuary of God ſhe declareth their end, ſhe caſteth them down into deſolation and utter deſtruction. After the ſame manner muſt we alſo learn to overcome the watchmen, even by making a right application of the word of God againſt them, before which they cannot ſtand: and alſo by comforting our ſelves through faith in Chriſt, againſt what they publiſhed of us in the ſtreets, then although they may ſeem to carry it over us outwardly before men, yet ſhall we inwardly reign over them through faith in Chriſt, who muſt reign in his members, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet.

VERSE IV.

It was but a little that I paſſed from them, but I found him whom my Soul loveth——

THis paſſing from the watchmen is the overcoming of that temptation, which the bride fell into, by reaſon of their ſmitings with the tongue, in reſpect of her name and reputation. This ſeemeth to be the laſt temptation in her ſad condition, which fell upon her immediately before deliverance came; for it was but a little time after ſhe paſſed from them, but *ſhe found him whom her Soul loved.*

She was not diſmayed at that bitter and heavy croſs, but ſtill continued ſeeking for help and deliverance: and at length ſhe found him *whom her Soul loved*, that is, *ſhe found him* createing help and deliverance, by ſuch ways and means, as ſhe never thought on, nor expected. And thus ſhall it aſſuredly come to paſs, for all thoſe that put their truſt in Chriſt, all things ſhall come to paſs where nothing is ſeen. And when *Satan* and all his inſtruments have done what they can, then ſhall the power of Chriſt appear above them all.

Therefore faith is a moſt victorious thing, that hath all the attributes of God knit faſt unto it, that it is as poſſible for God to become

no God, as it is for any thing to be wanting, where faith is uſed. But firſt we muſt ſuffer a tryal, not being offended but rejoycing in the croſs: then ſhall we find by experience, that faith is no idle quality in the Soul, but a certain kind of Divinity within us, which cleaveth faſt unto God; and obtaineth help and ſuccour from him.

Moreover this is to be noted, that in the midſt of this bitter and heavy temptation, ſhe calleth Chriſt ſtill, *he whom her Soul loveth*; which cometh from a perſwaſion of Chriſts love to her, otherwiſe it could not be. This aſſurance ariſeth from faith, learn we therefore that Doctrine, which breedeth and feedeth faith, then ſhall we alſo love God, and be fill'd with all Divine and Heavenly qualities. Now the bride having found her beloved, mark what ſhe did.

——I held him, and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mothers houſe, and into the chamber of her that conceived me.

Firſt, *ſhe held him*, ſhe laid up thoſe experiences of his merciful deliverances faſt in her mind and memory, and would not loſe them, nor yet declare them before ſcoffers and ſcorners, (that contemn the word and ways of God) but to thoſe of her Mothers houſe, (mean-

(meaning the Church of God) by whoſe Doctrine ſhe was regenerated and brought up in the faith of Chriſt: to her brethren and ſiſters there, thither ſhe brought her beloved, *and not only into her mothers houſe, but alſo into the Chamber where ſhe was conceived,* meaning the Conſcience, to which Chriſt muſt be made known, where ever the knowledg of him comes to be effectual. She is not contented that the knowledg of him ſhould be ſetled only in the head, but alſo in the hearts of others, therefore ſhe bringeth Chriſt into the very Chamber, and cannot be ſatisfied until he be there.

Which ſheweth us the true nature of faith where ever it is, which is never to reſt ſatisfied, until Chriſt be brought into the Conſcience, it is not at quiet but in performing the ſame office for others (after a certain manner) that Chriſt hath done for us, that even as Chriſt is become bountiful and beneficial to us, ſo alſo it ſtudieth which way to be bountiful and beneficial to all men, firſt to the Soul, and then to the body. Firſt, by teaching the Doctrine of Chriſt aright, next by teaching the Doctrine of good works, (and this is rightly to bring Chriſt into our mothers houſe) works cannot breed faith: faith cannot but breed good works. Therefore when good works are required, the Goſpel muſt go before, which muſt deliver and free the Conſcience from the guilt of ſin and wrath of God; and work in it

(*with the bride here*) a certain ſenſe of faith, that it may by a ſure and certain light, perceive the reaſon why it burſteth forth into all good works, and from what fountain they ſpring, and whither they are directed.

Verse V.

I charge you, O ye daughters of Jeruſalem, *by the Roes and by the Hindes of the field: that ye ſtir not up, nor awake my love until he pleaſe.*

The voice of Chriſt who being delighted in the faith and practiſe of his Church, when ſhe conſulteth not with the fleſh and reaſon, but being (*as it were*) in an holy ſleep with himſelf, *chargeth the daughters of Jeruſalem the ſecond time* (who are always diſturbers of the peace and ſecurity of the Church) *from the example of thoſe loving creatures that will not part: that trouble not nor ſeek to make any ſeparation between him and his ſponſe, until he himſelf pleaſe, which is never.*

Who

Verse VI.

Who is this that cometh out of the wilderneſs, like pillars of ſmoke——

BY the wilderneſs is meant a dark, ſolitary, and ſad condition, which the Church meeteth with in this world; which is a very wilderneſs, barren, and empty of all things which concerns the happineſs and comfort of the bride of Chriſt. Into this wilderneſs the Church is brought, where ſhe findeth nothing but *vanity and vexation of ſpirit:* therefore Chriſt here ſetteth her out by way of admiration, who is this that cometh out of the wilderneſs? That mounteth up above the world, and pineth not away in a ſad condition? For according to the wiſdom of the fleſh, there is no man under Heaven knoweth which way to get out: but the Church by faith in Chriſt cometh out, which is a ſervice highly accepted in the ſight of God, and which alſo preſerveth the Soul from ſinking in the day of adverſity, for when a man ſeeth others in proſperity, and himſelf in affliction, others to be highly eſteemed, and magnified for their outward pomp, and he himſelf to be incontempt, man is ready to judg ſuch perſons to be beloved of God, and he himſelf to be hated; but faith joineth *Eſa.* 35. 1.

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us to the words of Christ in this place, who doth not as the world do, praise and extol those that are high, honourable, and prosperous therein, but setteth out by words of admiration, those that do not faint in a sad condition. What wonderful excellent creature is this, that doth not languish and pine away in her affliction? Which words must comfort us in an evil time, and cause us to rejoyce, and sleep merrily in the woods through faith; although according to the flesh and reason, we see not which way to get out.

And it is said, she cometh out like *pillars of smoke*. Some write that the Artificers in *Egypt* could by their Art make smoke to ascend directly upright, *like unto a pillar*, and that the spirit of God may here have an allusion to that similitude. But whether that be so or not we know this to be true, that smoke is offensive to the eyes: now as smoke is troublesome to the eyes, that they cannot behold things aright; So is the Churches faith *(by which she cometh out of her afflictions)* offensive to the wicked, darkneth their sight that they cannot behold the inward glory of the Church: nor yet how she cometh out of her afflictions. Faith is like the cloudy pillar, which gave light to the Children of *Israel*; but was darkness to the *Egyptians*. The godly stand upright in all their tribulations, when others hang down their head like a bullrush. The Church understandeth well enough how she cometh out of her

her afflictions: but they that know not what the life and exerciſe of true faith is, cannot underſtand. Therefore the bride cometh out like pillars of ſmoke. Alſo ſome write that there is an Art in ſome, (with the uſe of certain powders) to perfume ſmoke; but this we are certain of, that the ſmoke of the incenſe *Rev.* 8. 3. in the golden cenſer, which is offered with the prayers of all the Saints, aſcendeth up before God, and perfumeth the Church.

Therefore when thou art in the wilderneſs, and haſt loſt thy way there, meeteſt with the wild-beaſts; by which thou art in danger to be made a prey, be not tormented nor diſquieted, but remember who brought thee in: *the Lord thy God led thee into the wilderneſs*, he did not hurl or throw thee as having no care of *Deut.* 8. 2. thee, but lovingly took thee by the hand and led thee, to ſhew thee the great and terrible wilderneſs, before thou comeſt to *Canaan* the promiſed Land. Be not thou diſmayed therefore, ſeeing the Lord thy God is with thee, but learn thou to become a ſmoking pillar, *Pſal.* 141. 2. *let thy prayers aſcend up as incenſe before God:* then although thou art in the wilderneſs (for a little while) in reſpect of the body, yet thou art in Heaven in reſpect of thy faith. And ſhalt alſo come out of the wilderneſs, not only dazling the eyes of the wicked, who know nothing of the uſe and practiſe of faith: but alſo ſweet, being perfum'd with heavenly powders as here it follows.

Perfumed

——*Perfumed with myrrhe and frankincenſe, and with all powders of the Merchant?*

The Merchant that hath the powders is the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. As Merchants bring powders which make excellent perfumes: So the Lord Jeſus Chriſt with his excellent perfumes, ſweeteth all thoſe that come unto him. Myrrhe was uſed in making the holy annointing oyl, to make perſons holy. And frankincenſe in making the ſweet perfume to ſmell thereto, which oyl and ſweet perfume was holineſs before the Lord; to all thoſe that were perfum'd therewith. Now as Myrrhe and Frankincenſe, mixed with other excellent ſpices, being made a perfume, a confection, after the Art of the Apothecary, made perſons outwardly holy; So doth the righteouſneſs of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, where it is received by faith, make perſons holy before God, freeing them from the guilt of ſin, and everlaſting condemnation. Now mark we the time here when the bride is thus perfum'd, it is when ſhe is in the wilderneſs: for ſhe cometh out thence perfum'd, who is this that cometh out of the wilderneſs perfum'd? Which muſt teach us what is firſt to be done, when we are led into the wilderneſs; even ſo to order our ſelves, that we may receive

Exod. 30. 32. 37.

ceive this Heavenly perfume. They that take offence at the croſs, cannot receive the perfume. But why ſhould any one be offended, ſeeing it is for no other end and purpoſe, but that by receiving the Heavenly powders; we might be ſenſible of our holineſs in the ſight of God.

Therefore, when we are brought into the wilderneſs, made to ſit in the deſert and ſolitary place, and all hope faileth us (in reſpect of reaſon) how or which way deliverance ſhall come: then if we can lift up our eyes and heart to our Redeemer with an aſſured faith, we ſhall on a ſuddain be altogether be cenſed with theſe Heavenly powders, and made to partake of all that the Merchant hath to beſtow, the ſmell of which powders ſhould more refreſh and comfort us, then the fear of any danger ſhould poſſibly diſmay us.

Verse VII. & VIII.

Behold his bed, which is Solomons: *three-ſcore valiant men are about it, of the valiant of Iſrael.*

They all hold ſwords being expert in war, every man hath his ſword upon his thigh, becauſe of fear in the night.

After the Lord Jeſus Chriſt had ſet forth by way of admiration the behaviour of his Church in the time of her diſtreſs, and how ſhe came out of the wilderneſs perfum'd, he calleth others to behold it, (as being a thing of great excellency and weight) under the ſimilitude of *Solomons* bed.

Solomon being a King rich and glorious, and alſo excellent in wiſdom, made himſelf many rich and coſtly things; and amongſt other things made himſelf a moſt ſumptious bed, for the entertainment of *Pharaohs* Daughter and others of his Queens: and as he made himſelf a bed, ſo he provided alſo a guard to keep the bed, and the guarding of his bed is ſhown by the manner of his guard that kept it, they were ſixty men, and for their ſtrength they are ſaid to be valiant men; and to note their faithfulneſs, they are ſaid to be choſen men in *Iſrael*, not ſtrangers, but his own country men; truſty ones,

ones, ſuch as were fit to guard a Prince: they were alſo expert men, skilful in handling of their weapons, wherefore it is added, *they all hold Swords*, and their ſwords are in a readineſs, *every man hath his Sword upon his thigh:* and the reaſon of his guard was becauſe of fear in the night.

All which noteth, the defence that *Solomon* had for himſelf about his bed, to preſerve him from danger in the night by the ſtrong men of *Iſrael.* Now to apply this to the ſimilitude.

King *Solomon* is the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, his bed is the place of meeting, where Chriſt and his Church meet together in publick, or in private, and the bed being ſaid to be his; it noteth, that it is a delight to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt to be in the bed with his Church; to behold her in the right uſe and excerciſe of her faith, which by the word, *behold*, he calleth all people diligently to take notice of, that they may know what ſervice above all things, is moſt acceptable to him.

But what is ſignified by the ſixty valiant men that are about the bed to guard it? *Queſt.*

Some have thought that by theſe ſixty valiant men are meant the Angels, which being of invincible ſtrength; are ſet to be the Churches guardians. *Anſ.*

But I conceive that although the Angels are wonderful in power, and alſo do pitch their Tents round about them that fear the Lord: being

being all miniſtring Spirits ſent forth for their ſakes which ſhall be heirs of glory; yet that the Miniſtry of Angels is not here meant, becauſe the outward ſafety of the Church is not ſo much intended here; as her inward purity, in reſpect of Doctrine and faith, which inward purity is preſerved in the Church, by the Miniſtry of men, and not by the Miniſtry of Angels.

Theſe threeſcore valiant men I therefore underſtand to be the Church of the firſt born, whoſe names are written in Heaven, principal men in the Church, who do all with one conſent endeavour to keep the marriage bed pure and undefiled, teaching the Doctrine of faith truly, and the Doctrine of good works aright: theſe be the valiant men that are about the bed, that are mighty through their Doctrine to throw down the Kingdom of *Satan*, to confute and overthrow all *Hereticks* and *Seducers*, that even as *Davids* worthies did ſtrengthen him in his Kingdom, by ſmiting the *Jebuſites* that *David* alone might reign, ſo do theſe valiant ones of *Iſrael* throw down by their Doctrine the old Foundations, ſetting up Chriſt to be the Head of the corner.

Beſides, they are not ohly valiant men, but men that are armed, they all hold Swords; they do not run fooliſhly into the field, but before they enter into the combate, are ſure of their weapons, and alſo how to uſe them, for they are men expert in War, they know

the

the bottom and foundation of all controverſy in the Church, and wherein the ſtrength of all arguments lie: theſe are faſt fellows that will not be baſled, but will ſtand their ground: *every man hath his Sword upon his thigh*, the word of God in a readineſs, they are ready to ſtrike, and they draw not the Sword in vain, but manfully ſet about the work; to deſtroy the wiſdom of the wiſe, and to bring to nothing the underſtanding of the prudent, and this is their principal work.

For there is no enmity in all the world (the caſe being rightly underſtood) but about the Goſpel, neither is there any enmity betwixt God and us but about the Goſpel. Deſtroy by the Goſpel but the wiſdom and righteouſneſs in man: and we have peace in Heaven, and peace on earth. For go into what Nation, City, Family or Tribe, ſo ever thou wilt, and wiſely enquire into this matter, and thou ſhalt find that the cauſe of all diviſions whatſoever, both in matters of Religion, and civil differences lyeth in this one thing, becauſe mans (*opinion of his own*) wiſdom and righteouſneſs reigneth.

Therefore men are fill'd with complaints one againſt another, but no man complaineth againſt himſelf: which maketh it manifeſt that all men have an high conceit of their own wiſdom, and goodneſs, prizing of themſelves at an higher rate then all the world. For their opinion of themſelves is ſo great, that all

men must stoop unto it, worship and adore it.

And so also in matters of Religion, this opinion is so strong and mighty, that it will not endure to hear; that any man should perswade himself, that the righteousnes of the Lord Jesus Christ is given to him, unless he first find in himself such qualifications as *(in his opinion)* make him worthy of the same. Now because this opinion in man fighteth directly against the Gospel, *(which forbideth it in the first place)* it being the only sin that defileth the bed, and which banisheth Christ out of the mind and Conscience: therefore against this opinion *(that man hath of his wisdom)* do every one of these valiant ones set themselves, and use all their heavenly skill and cunning to destroy the same, as being the strongest hold of *Satans* Kingdom. And this they do for this reason, *because of fear in the night.* This is the work of these valiant men, to banish *(by their Doctrine)* the fear of Gods wrath and everlasting damnation, out of the mind and Conscience: and to settle it in peace and joy. That when a man is in a dark and sad condition *(in the night of affliction)* by reason of his sin, the forerunner of fear and fearfulnes; he might learn to remove and overcome his fear, by a right understanding and application of the Gospel. No man being able to overcome his fear by the righteousnes of the Law, and his own works: but by cleaving to the promise of God

God by faith without the Law. Therefore if thou wilt be one of the number of theſe valiant men, learn thou rightly how to guard King *Solomons* bed, how to diſpoſſeſs the Conſcience of fear: that Chriſt may lodge in the chamber with his bride, otherwiſe thou art not fit to be of the guard. Learn thou therefore to be expert in handling thy weapons to this purpoſe: for the pulling down of ſtrong holds, and the caſting down of imaginations, that every thought may be brought into captivity to the obedience of Chriſt. If thy Doctrine ſetteth up ſtrong holds in man, and raiſeth up mans imaginations of himſelf; then thou ſoweſt in the heart the principles of fear, but if by thy Doctrine thou pulleſt them down, then thou baniſheſt fear. 2 *Cor.* 10. 4. 5.

If thou thinkeſt by an outward reformation to be poſſeſſed of Chriſt, and to baniſh fear; in ſtead of baniſhing fear, thou wilt baniſh Chriſt, for as much as that very opinion in thee crucifieth the ſon of God, that bed being to ſhort and the covering to narrow, to wrap thy ſelf in from the wrath of God. *Eſa.* 28. 20.

Learn therefore to be skilful and very cunning in this point. If thou groundeſt thy faith upon the Law, thou utterly loſeſt Chriſt; but if thy faith be formed by the Goſpel without the Law, then ſhalt thou have righteouſneſs, peace, and joy in the holy Ghoſt. Then ſhall thy faith be undefiled, and the marriage bed preſerved pure. Then ſhalt thou be of the

number of the threeſcore valiant men ſpoken of in this place that all hold Swords *becauſe of fear in the night.*

Verse IX. & X.

King Solomon *made himſelf a Chariot of the wood of Lebanon.*

He made the pillars thereof of Silver, the bottom thereof of gold, the covering of it of Purple: the midſt thereof being paved with love, for the daughters of Jeruſalem.

IN the former Verſe is ſet down wherein the delight of Chriſt lyeth, even to be in the bed with his Church, and alſo the guard that is ſet about the bed; that the Churches Doctrine and faith might be preſerved pure. Now here is ſet down the Magnificency or ſtatelineſs of the place, and how it comes to be builded, under the ſimilitude of King *Solomons* Chariot, Bed-Chamber, or Coach, wherein King *Solomon* and his Queen might rejoyce and have communion together.

Where the firſt thing reſpected is the builder, which is King *Solomon.* He deſcrib'd the faſhion of it, and gave his Artificers, or workmen, a plot for the making of it.

Then

Then here is the matter that *Solomon* uſed in building the Chariot, the wood of *Lebanon*, Cedars, choiſe wood which will not rot and conſume, but is durable, and beyond all timber for ſweetneſs.

The pillars being made of Silver, and the bottom of it covered with gold, ſignifies the ſtatelineſs and the durableneſs of it, and that it was no ordinary thing, being not made of corruptible matter.

The covering of it with purple, a moſt rich and ſumptuous kind of hanging: and of a moſt Princely colour.

And the midſt of it paved with love, or (*as ſome will have it*) wrought with needle work in divers colours, which made it delightful to behold.

And this was done for the daughters of *Jeruſalem*, for thoſe Ladies of Honour to behold and delight themſelves in, that did pertain to the Kings Court.

Now to apply the Similitude.

The Chariot is the Church, or people with whom the Lord Jeſus Chriſt hath communion.

The maker of the Chariot is Chriſt, by the righteouſneſs of his own perſon.

The materials Chriſt maketh uſe of in the building of the Church, or the Artificers, or inſtruments, be men; he doth it by the Miniſtry of men, who are oftentimes compared to *Cedars* in *Lebanon*. *Eph.* 4. 8 12. *Pſal.* 9.

Gal. 2. 9. The pillars are alſo men, ſo the godly are often ſaid to be.

Rev. 3. 12. And the ſilver and the gold here mentioned, of which thoſe pillars are made, is the pure

1 *Pet.* 2. 5. Doctrine of the Goſpel which is ſweet, and ſaid to be immortal, which endureth for ever.

The purple covering is the righteouſneſs of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, covering the ſinful Conſcience from the wrath of God, and the fear of everlaſting condemnation.

And the paving of it with love, is the making of the way plain and eaſie to come to Chriſt, that all ſtumbling blocks being removed, men may run to him with joy and rejoycing. And all this is done for the daughters of *Jeruſalem*.

Note. All which being well conſidered, ſheweth plainly, that the chief and principal thing, that is needful in the building of the Church of God, is the right underſtanding of the Scriptures.

For it muſt be built with Silver and Gold, and if you conſult with *Eſai.* 54. with precious ſtones alſo, all which ſignifie, the pure Doctrine of the Goſpel. Which building cannot go forward, without a right underſtanding of the Scriptures. The Silver pillars can never be made, the golden bottom can never be laid, the Church can never be covered with the purple covering, the righteouſneſs of the Lord Jeſus

Jeſus Chriſt: if there be not a right underſtanding of the Scriptures taught.

Thoſe that are builders of the Lords Chariot, and underſtand not the Scriptures; in ſtead of making Silver pillars, and laying the golden bottom, they lay a foundation of wood and traſh. In ſtead of building with Gold and Silver and precious ſtones, which will not decay; they build with timber, hay, and ſtubble, which will rot and conſume. And hence it comes to paſs, that in ſtead of cloathing the diſtreſſed Conſcience with the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and paving the way for the Soul to come to Chriſt, and making of thoſe Scriptures eaſy to be underſtood, which ſeem to ſtand in direct oppoſition to faith: it ſo falls out that the way to juſtification and life ſeems to be crooked, rough, and unpaved even to the builders themſelves, ſo that in the midſt of their work they are many times at a ſtand, and in ſtead of building, fall at difference amongſt themſelves; ſome build for Chriſt, and others build for Antichriſt; and all this comes to paſs for want of a right underſtanding of the Scriptures.

Not that there is a neceſſity of the underſtanding of all Scripture in building the Chariot: but of the principal parts of the word, ſuch as are eſſential to a mans being, and living in the ſtate of grace.

Such Scriptures as concern the Doctrine of juſtification and life Eternal, (*without the works and righteouſneſs of man*) and of the be-

haviour of the Soul under the ſight and feeling of ſin, and the apprehenſion of mercy, by which Doctrine only the Church is built. And there are two principal parts in the Scripture, the Law and the promiſe both which in reſpect of their uſe and office, are of great concernment. Some when they make uſe of the Law do ſo interpret it, that they take away the glory of mans Salvation from God, and give it to men; theſe interpret without a rule, and for want of the rule to underſtand the Scripture by, which is the Divine Teſtimony of the holy Ghoſt, their building falls, and all their labour is loſt. For all Scripture is given by Divine inſpiration: therefore ſeeing the holy Ghoſt is the inditer, he ought alſo to be the interpreter. No Scripture being of any private interpretation from which it follows, that he that will be ſure that the ſence which he giveth is right; muſt have his authority from the holy Ghoſt, to warrant his expoſition to be true. To believe as the Church believes is not the rule to underſtand the Scriptures by, for the Church may erre, and when ſhe erreth from the publick interpretation of the holy Ghoſt, her interpretation is private, and not to be received.

Now as in all Arts and Sciences, the firſt principles are proving, and not to be proved, ſo in the Scriptures. And as the firſt principle in Divinity is the Scripture: So the firſt principle in the Scripture is the firſt Commandment.

Thou

Thou ſhalt have no other Gods but me. Which if thou underſtandeſt according to the Goſpel, it is this. *Thou ſhalt know no other, love no other, delight in, nor depend upon any other righteouſneſs but mine*, whereby to become righteous in the ſight of God. Which righteouſneſs of God is not the righteouſneſs of the Law, perform'd in thine own perſon: but the righteouſneſs of faith which is manifeſted without the Law. So that the firſt Commandment driveth thee from the Law, to ſeek for righteouſneſs in Chriſt. The Goſpel calleth thee to come; and the firſt Commandment biddeth thee begon. It ſaith to thee as the Angels did unto *Lot*, haſt thee thither, eſcape for thy life; ſtay thou not in all the plain. And as *Jonathan* ſaid to *David* when *Saul* intended evil againſt him, *run, make ſpeed, haſt, ſtay not, the arrows are beyond thee.*

Mar. 12. 28. *Hoſ.* 13. 4. *Eſa.* 43. 11. *Thou ſhalt know no God but me, for there is no Saviour beſides me.* *Rom.* 3. 21. *This ſeemeth to be the meaning alſo of* Paul: *I through the Law am dead to the Law.* *Gal.* 2. 19. *Gen.* 19. 17. 1 *Sam.* 20. 38.

By which thou mayeſt ſee, that the Law notwithſtanding it requireth of thee, Active obedience before men: yet, it requireth thee to become paſſive, and wholly to renounce it, in thy obtaining Righteouſneſs before God.

He that will ſpiritually perform the Law muſt wholly renounce it in the matter of juſtification.

Wherefore if thou wilt be a builder of King *Solomons* Chariot, to make the Sillver pillars, and to lay the golden bottom: learn thou by the firſt Commandment to pave the way, to make the crooked places ſtraight, and the rough places plain, that poor diſtreſſed Conſciences may come to Chriſt: that ſo when any ſtumbling *Eſa.* 40.

ling block is caſt into the way, about the righteouſneſs of the Law, to hinder the diſtreſſed Conſcience from cloſing with Chriſt: thou mayeſt eaſily remove it by the proving principle. Otherwiſe, if thou draweſt the Law into the matter of juſtification, thou walkeſt contrary to the firſt Commandment and alſo ſinneſt againſt the Goſpel, blockeſt up the way, and ſhutteſt faſt the door of the Kingdom of Heaven. Learn therefore by thy Doctrine to ſeparate the droſs from the Silver: ſo ſhall there proceed a veſſel for the finer. Then ſhalt thou make veſſels of Gold and Silver; even veſſels of Honour. Some ſtones in the building of the Temple were ſet for glittering ſtones, to make a ſhining, if thou receiveſt no other interpretation of any Scripture, but what is agreeable to the firſt Commandment, then ſhalt thou become a glittering ſtone in the Church of God: then ſhall the houſe of God be magnifical, and full of Fame, and Dignity, then ſhall thy Doctrine ſhine and make a great light.

Pro. 25. 4.

2 *Tim.* 2. 20.

1 *Cor.* 29. 2.

1 *Chro.* 22. 5.

Hitherto hath been ſhewed what the Chariot is, and what is principally needful for the building of it; now next it is ſhewed for whom the Chariot is made, or why men are made ſo skilful by Chriſt, to work in Gold and Silver and Purple, and other curious works, to cover the ſinful Conſcience from the wrath of God; it is for the daughters of *Jeruſalem*. But why *Jeruſalem*?

In

In all ages of the Church, the people of God were to ſeek him where he had promiſed to be found. And God made promiſe that where ever he ſhould place the Ark: there he would meet his people and bleſs them. Which Ark of God was ſometimes in *Shiloh*, ſometimes in *Zion* the City of *David*; but when *Solomon* had builded the Temple, then it was brought by the *Prieſts* and *Levites* into the Temple at *Jeruſalem*, and then the promiſe was there. And as God made promiſe to *Solomon*, at the dedication of the Temple, that his eyes and his heart ſhould be there perpetually: So the faithful in their prayers, were always to pray towards *Jeruſalem*. So that who ever he were that ſought after God, either to hear any thing from him, or to receive any thing of him; he muſt ſeek him in *Jeruſalem*. *Exod.* 25. 22.

But now the corporal *Jeruſalem* is deſtroyed, the Ark is to be ſought for in the new *Jeruſalem*. *Which Ark is Baptiſm.* For as the promiſe of Gods preſence then, was where ever the Ark (*by Gods appointment*) was plac'd; So the promiſe of Chriſts preſence now, is where Baptiſm is preſerved aright. Baptiſm then is the Ark in the new *Jeruſalem*. Not a reſting in the work done, and corrupting the nature of it; but where the true reaſon of its inſtitution, is taught and preſerved. Therefore the Tabernacle of God is ſaid to be with men, and our bodies to be the viſible Temples of the Holy Ghoſt; in regard of Baptiſm our Spiritual Ark. *Mat.* 28. *Rev.* 21.3. *Cor.* 2.6.

Where-

Wherefore the Chariot being made for the Daughters of *Jeruſalem*; it meaneth for thoſe that are brought up under the Ark. For *Jeruſalem* is the Mother, becauſe ſhe abideth by the Ark; ſhe ſticketh faſt to the promiſes of God, and inſtructeth all her Childeren in the ſame.

To thoſe, and to all thoſe, that are viſible members of the Church, is the word of God ſent: for although the bleſſing in the word, be received but by a few, yet the tender on Gods part is univerſal, and muſt not be denied, that thoſe for whom it is prepared may receive it; and they that refuſe may be left without excuſe.

Some will allow that all ſhall hear the word, but deny their free admiſſion to the Sacrament of the Lords-Supper.

But the Ark being the ground of Church-communion, (*as aforeſaid*) ſo long as the Ark remains, right to the Lords Supper doth remain. For nothing can cauſe the loſs of any Church privileg, but the want of that which is Eſſential to its being: now Baptiſm being Eſſential to all Church priveledges, till Baptiſm be renounced, right to all Church priviledges muſt remain.

Heb. 11. 4. *Deut.* 14. 23. *Rom.* 15. 8. Beſides, all the Sacraments that ever were, were incitements to faith and piety, inſtituted on purpoſe to teach men to believe; as is eaſy enough to be ſeen, being all preparatives to faith and holineſs, and not effects; therefore none,

none muſt be debarr'd, but all admitted. Elſe how ſhall the faith of the Church become Sacramental, which faith was never wanting to the Church in any age. *Exod.* 12. 23.

And as the word belongs to the Children of the Ark, and to all of them: ſo it belongs to none, but only them. *Joh.* 1. 31. *Luk.* 22. 20.

None can demonſtrate, that ever any people had a viſible intereſt in the Scriptures, and to the interpretation thereof, but only thoſe people whom God firſt plac'd, and alſo preſerved, under the external ſigns of his Covenant. *Pſal.* 147. *Rom.* 3. *Acts* 10. 17. 13, 24.

Jeruſalem is the Mother, becauſe ſhe bringeth forth Children under the Ark, not in bringing forth Children before ſhe cometh to the Ark: So likewiſe, they are not daughters of *Jeruſalem*, that count themſelves holy and Saints before they come to the Ark, all that teach that Doctrine pertain to another Mother, and not to *Jeruſalem* which is above, the Mother of us all. All thoſe pertain to *Sinai* which is in bondage with her Children: and not to the new *Jeruſalem* the celeſtial and Heavenly City.

Therefore, let us not deſpiſe the Riches of our beloved and loſe ſo great a Treaſure, but ſeeing he is ſo bountiful unto us; as to let us hear his word, to make us his Chariot, that we might have communion with himſelf, be ſaved from an evil Conſcience, and from his everlaſting wrath; and be brought to live in glory with him for ever hereafter, let us thank and bleſs

bleſs his holy name, and joyfully embrace his favour. And let us alſo learn, ſo to underſtand his word; that we may receive the Heavenly gift of God that is ſent unto us: and ſo to underſtand the Sacraments that thereby we may be drawn to faith and true repentance. Which that we may learn, we muſt diligently mark what here next follows.

Verse XI.

Go forth, ye Daughters of Zion and behold King Solomon *with the Crown, wherewith his Mother Crowned him in the day of his eſpouſals, and in the day of the gladneſs of his heart.*

IN which words the Holy Ghoſt directeth the Daughter of *Zion*, to a right behaviour of Soul, in receiving that Doctrine, wherewith the Chariot is made, which is to *go forth and behold.*

By which words he rightly teacheth, what the righteouſneſs of the Goſpel is; not to reſt in our ſelves, but by faith to behold King *Solomon* with his Crown. And alſo how the righteouſneſs of Chriſt ſhall be received and kept: even by going forth from depending upon

upon our own inherent righteouſneſs. Theſe are the two moſt Excellent and moſt uſeful points above all others, and ought above all things to be preferred. Which Doctrine we rightly learn, when we ſubmit our ſelves to the comdemnation of the Law; and ſuffer our ſelves by faith, to be divorced from the Law. Elſe what doth it avail us to hear, that the righteouſneſs of Chriſt is ever ſo excellent a thing; if we be not inſtructed by the Goſpel how to be divorced from our own. Now in this thing Chriſt differeth from all Teachers, for the wiſdom of man Teacheth after this ſort, if thou wilt attain to faith in Chriſt, and be aſſured thereof, do the Law, *keep the Commandments of God:* but the wiſdom of the Holy Ghoſt ſaith the clean contrary, *go forth and behold King Solomon with his Crown.* For this Act of faith in going forth to behold, is not to do the Law; but wholly to depart from the Law. So that rightly to behold King *Solomon* with his Crown; is wholly to forget and loſe the Law.

This place therefore teacheth us, how the righteouſneſs of the Ten Commandments may be attained, not by our doing the works of the Law; but by faith in Chriſt without the Law. Even by beholding the Kingdom and victory of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt to be given to us freely. This matter concerneth the conſcience, and therefore it had need be well learned. Therefore when thou feeleſt thy ſin,

and

and feareſt the wrath to come, confeſs it to God; and ask forgiveneſs for Chriſts ſake with a believing heart; then haſt thou ſpiritually fulfill'd the Law, foraſmuch as the righteouſneſs of Chriſt is given to thee, as ſoon as thou feeleſt and confeſſeſt thy condemnation by the Law; which thing thou oughteſt to beleive, it being the chief Corner-Stone in building the Kingdom of Chriſt in thy diſtreſſed Conſcience. Therefore who ever thou art that wouldeſt attain to righteouſneſs before God, and alſo to true peace and comfort in thy Conſcience, learn thou the way how to attain the ſame: even by faith in Chriſt without the works of the Law, to go forth and behold King *Solomon* with his Crown.

Gal. 4.5. *Rom.* 8.3. *Heb.* 2.14. *Hoſ.* 13.14 *Joh.* 3.16. Now the Crown betokeneth the victory that Chriſt hath gotten over the Law, *Satan*, ſin, and death; which victory is given to thee, as ſoon as thou believeſt.

Gal. 4.26. 1 *Kings.* And it is further added here, the Crown wherewith his Mother Crowned him; by which is meant the Church. And by Crowning him the right preaching of the Goſpel, and alſo receiving of the ſame. For even as *Bathſheba* the Mother of *Solomon*, became inſtrumental for the ſetting of King *Solomon* on his Regal Throne: So doth the Church which is the Mother of us all become inſtrumental; in the Crowning of Chriſt by the Preaching of the Goſpel. Now Chriſt is Crowned by his Mother, when ſhe ſo interpreteth the Law, that

that ſhe taketh away all glory from man; and attributeth the praiſe of her Salvation to Chriſt alone. In the Crowning of Chriſt, ſhe afflicteth her Children with the feeling of ſin by the Law; and comforteth them again with the Crown and victory of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt without the Law.

The Mother of Harlots, Crowneth Chriſt in words, calling him her Lord, King, and Law-giver: but by her practice ſhe denyeth him. For ſhe ſo interpreteth all thoſe Scriptures that are branches of the Law; that ſhe draweth the Law into the Doctrine of juſtification. *Rev.* 18:

Thus ſhe taketh off the Crown, from Chriſts head, who is Crowned with Glory and Honour; and putteth upon his head a Crown of Thornes. *Heb.* 2:

There is a two fold Crowning of Chriſt in Scripture by his Father, and by his Mother. The firſt was at his Reſurrection, when he was declared to be Lord and Chriſt, that was by his Father; the ſecond, when the benefits of his death and Reſurrection, are infuſed into the Conſciences of men by the Preaching of the Goſpel, this is done by his Mother. Therefore we are not only to behold him Crowned by the Father, although that we muſt do firſt; but alſo to learn the true way of Crowning him as the Mother, that he alone may reign in the heart and Conſcience. This is the day of the gladneſs of Chriſts heart, it being the *2 Acts* 36.

day of his eſpouſals: when he marrieth us unto himſelf in an everlaſting Covenant; and rejoyceth in us, and over us as the Bridegroom rejoyceth over the Bride.

Now when we have learn'd by faith to be ſeparated from the Law, and to go forth and behold King *Soloman* with his Crown; then muſt we come into the practice of the Law, which is to go forth and behold him in his afflicted members, to help thoſe that are in
Tit. 3. 8. miſery; to comfort all that are in diſtreſs. Thus all that have believed in God muſt be careful to maintain good works, which are good and profitable unto men.

So that although the Goſpel divorceth us from the Law, in the matter of juſtification; yet, it joyneth us to the matter of Sanctification; and cauſeth us to do that freely for others, (*according to our power*) which our Lord Jeſus Chriſt out of his abundant kindneſs hath freely done for us.

For who can chooſe but ſhew kindneſs joyfully to his brother: that hath apprehended by faith the love of Chriſt towards himſelf? All works before the Goſpel is received are naught, becauſe they are not directed towards men, but drawn into the judgment ſeat to make us righteous; but faith ſeparateth works from the judgment ſeat, and directeth them towards our neighbour, and ſo it makes our works, good works.

This

This wiſdom the world underſtandeth not, therefore it is condemned for deſpiſing the Goſpel, which it will not be ſubject to. Let us learn therefore, to lay aſide our works when we come before God, that we may be juſtified by faith; and live in the practice of all good works before men, that we may want no qualification which the Goſpel requires.

CHAP. IV.

VERSE I.

Behold, thou art fair, my love, behold, thou art fair, thou haſt doves eyes within thy locks: thy hair is as a flock of goats, that appear from Mount Gilead.

CHRIST having (*in the former Verſe*) directed the Church how to receive his righteouſneſs by faith alone, here he commendeth her *for her fairneſs*, and calleth her to *behold it*; and doubles it again, that ſhe may believe it. In which commendation he ſetteth her forth by the parts and features of the body, by which are meant the Spiritual beauty of the Church. Firſt, he commendeth *her eyes*, which are the inſtruments of ſight, whereby ſhe beholdeth her beloved: and compareth them to the *eyes of doves*, in regard ſhe continually reſpecteth her mate as the *dove*. Which ſheweth, that when ſhe is diſowned and forſaken of the Law, yet then ſhe looketh up by faith unto her Redeemer. In regard therefore, that ſhe ſpieth out by faith, the comforts of her beloved in a ſad

ſad condition; ſhe is pronounced to be fair, and called to behold it. And after the ſame manner it is alſo with us, as ſoon as we humble our ſelves for our wretchedneſs, and do behold his righteouſneſs to be given unto us; it is pronounced in Heaven, *thou art fair my love, thou art fair.* Therefore, this being the decree, that is pronounc'd in Heaven; we muſt learn by faith to behold, and receive it into the Conſcience.

The next thing commended is her hair, which ſeemeth to mean the whole company of believers; as may be gathered from the ſimilitude of the Prophets hair; which ſignified the dividing of the people of *Iſrael*, and alſo in regard of the Original from whence the hair proceedeth, which is the head; having its nouriſhment from the moiſture and ſtrength of the head. And alſo it being likened to a flock: it doubtleſs meaneth, *the flock of Chriſt.* *Ezek.* 5. 1, 12.

Theſe hairs are likened to the Goats that appear from Mount Gilead, which was a Mountain beyond *Jordan*, where the tribe of *Manaſſeh* dwelt. Which Mountain being excellent for feeding, thoſe that dwelt there had many *Goats:* and alſo there were Trees of price, and eſtimation for the *Goats* to breuſe on, and to rub themſelves againſt, therefore the *Goats* were of good liking; and alſo ſmooth. *Now the hairs being likened to a flock of theſe Goats*; it ſheweth, that they have rich feeding in *Num.* 32 39.

green paſtures, becauſe they all hang upon their head the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Verse II.

Thy teeth are like a flock of ſheep that are even ſhorn, which came up from the waſhing: whereof every one bear twins, and none is barren among them.

The teeth are the inſtruments of the ſtomach, whereby the meat is fitted for diſgeſture; by which are ſignified, the Miniſters of the word, and breakers of the bread of life, whoſe office is, ſo to chew the Spiritual meat, that it may be digeſted, and become nouriſhment to the Soul. Theſe are ſaid to be like
Iſa. 40. 9. a *flock of ſheep*, becauſe they receive their nouriſhment from Chriſt, of whom it is ſaid, *he ſhall feed his flock like a ſhepherd. And to go up from the waſhing: being made white in the blood of the Lamb.* And to be even ſhorn, which ſheweth, the goodneſs of the paſture where they feed; whereby they grow to be in very high caſe, even like ſheep that are fed in fat ground, that are ſo rank in wooll; and ſo high in fleſh, that they will ſhear even. And to bring forth twins, becauſe they teach a right

a right conceiving, of the uſe and Office of the Law and Goſpel. Theſe twins every one of theſe teeth bring forth, and not one is (*ſaid to be*) barren among them.

This ſheweth us, that thoſe which ſo handle the word of God, as to deſtroy the uſe and office of the Law and Goſpel thereby, are not the teeth of the Church here ſpoken of, becauſe they deſtroy the twins. They are not the right breakers of the bread of life, they chew not the Spiritual meat aright, and therefore it never comes to be nouriſhment to the Soul: but in ſtead thereof, the ſheep do hunger-bane and ſtarve away. And from hence it comes to paſs, that when ſhearing time comes, when the owner of the ſheep, ſhould receive the profit of his flock; there is nothing to be had, *neither wooll nor Lamb.* For in ſtead of chewing and preparing the word that the Conſcience may rightly conceive, and bring forth twins: they fume into the ſtomach a falſe opinion of God, and the loſs of true and Eternal happineſs. For the glory of *Iſrael* *Hoſ.* 9.11. *flyeth away like a Bird, from the birth, from the womb, and from the conception:* the Conſcience (which is the womb of the Church) never rightly conceiving of the Law, nor of the Goſpel. Such teeth are rotten and muſt be drawed, being fit for nothing but to be plucked out: becauſe no man is nouriſhed by them, but every mans mind and Conſcience remains defiled.

Therefore, that the word of God may rightly be conceiv'd in the Conſcience, which is the womb of the Church; the *Rams* of the flock muſt be of a right kind. For the twins come not altogether by reaſon of the fatneſs of the paſture: but alſo from the breed of the *Ram*.

Therefore it was promiſed as a great bleſſing to the Church by the Holy Ghoſt, *when the Rams of Nebajoth ſhould Miniſter unto it.* *Nebajoth* was the eldeſt ſon of *Iſhmael*, ſo called by his Town, which belonged to the Iſles of the Gentiles. Now the Gentiles had not the Law: yet did pertain to the promiſe made to *Abraham*, *in thy ſeed ſhall all Nations of the Earth be bleſſed.* Eſa. 60.

Theſe *Rams* then of *Nebajoth*, were ſuch as ſhould learn by the Goſpel, rightly to underſtand the Law; and alſo by the Goſpel, to attain to the righteouſneſs of the Law. Such *Rams* muſt be choſen, and drove into the flock, who can teach by the Goſpel, the true underſtanding of the Law: that Doctrine, and that alone bringeth forth twins, and not one is barren among them.

By this we may eaſily diſcern, between the teeth of the Church, that have this commendation of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; and thoſe teeth that ſerve for no other uſe but to corrupt the word of God. Alſo from hence we muſt learn, ſo to expound, hear and receive the word, that the right uſe and Office of the Law

Law and Goſpel may be known and preſerved; every one that ſo Preacheth, Expoundeth and receiveth the ſame, ſhall bring forth twins, and not one ſhall remain barren among them.

VERSE III.

Thy lips are like a threed of Scarlet, and thy ſpeech is comely: thy Temples are like a piece of a Pomegranate within thy locks.

THe lips are the inſtruments of ſpeech, by which words are uttered. Which words *are like a threed of Scarlet*, when they are dyed in the blood of Chriſt: and alſo *like a threed*, when they are faſtned and hang'd together, as it were with a threed or lace, when Arguments are grounded upon a right diviſion, when one thing is ſo drawn out of another, that there is no deſtroying of any one point, unleſs the threed be broke, and all be deſtroyed together, then is the ſpeech comely. Contrary to this it is, when arguments are not grounded upon a right diviſion, when the affirming of one thing overthrows another: when both notwithſtanding are ſtrongly holden for truths. Such Doctrine is not laced together with a threed; neither is there any knot to be undone,

done, becauſe the Doctrine divideth of its own nature.

The Temples are the ſeat of invention, or finding out of things. And are ſaid to be like a piece of a Pomegranate; becauſe the rind of the Pomegranate being broken of, the kernels make an excellent ſhew. Therefore the Churches temples are here commended, becauſe ſhe findeth out the miſtery of the Goſpel; in handling the word of God, ſhe breaketh the rinde, and ſheweth the kernels of things, which is very delightful and pleaſant to the Soul.

Pſal. 132. 5.

Verse IV.

Thy neck is like the Tower of David, *builded for an armory, whereon there hang a thouſand bucklers, all ſhields of mighty men.*

BY the neck of the Church is meant, ſtrength, as appears in divers places in the *Lamentations* of *Jeremiah*. And is ſaid to be like the Tower of *David*, becauſe when *David* was anointed King over *Iſrael*, he took the Fort of *Zion*, and made himſelf ſtrong againſt the *Jebuſites* (by fortifying the ſame) and overcame them. Now the ſtrength of the Church

Lam. 1. 14. *Lam.* 5. 5. 1 *Sam.* 5. 7. 1 *Chr.* 11. 5.

Church is faith, which being likened to *Davids* Tower ſheweth us, that even as *David* by the ſtrength of his Tower fortified himſelf againſt the *Jebuſites*; So is the Church alſo fortified by her faith, which (*as the neck knitteth the body to the head*) knitteth her to Chriſt, by which ſhe overcometh all her Spiritual Enemies. But where there is no faith there Chriſt and the Church are parted, becauſe there is no neck to join them together. Such may be joined to the Societies of men: but they cannot be united to Chriſt, becauſe they want the neck which couples the Church to Chriſt. Therefore ſeeing faith is our victory, by which we muſt overcome all the fiery darts of the Devil: it behoveth us to know the proper nature of it, and the right uſe of it, and alſo how to define it rightly in the time of Temptation, leſt otherwiſe in ſtead of conquering, we ſhould in the end be overthrown.

Moreover in that it is ſaid, there hang a thouſand bucklers thereon, it further ſheweth us, that faith is a moſt mighty ſhield; for even as King *Davids* Tower, built for an armory, was fortified with Spears, Shields, and Bucklers, to ſtrengthen him againſt his corporal enemies: ſo faith, (whereſoever the uſe of it is rightly known) hath all things in it to defend us from our ſpiritual enemies, becauſe it knitteth us to all the power and protection that is in God. Therefore theſe Bucklers are ſaid to be, all ſhields of Mighty men, becauſe all that put upon

2 *Cron.* 23. 9.

upon them the ſhield of faith, are mighty to overcome themſelves, the world, and the Devil.

So that even as *Davids* Worthies, did hold ſtrongly with him, and with all *Iſrael*, to make him King: ſo do all theſe mighty men by their Doctrine and faith, oppoſe the world, and the whole Kingdom of *Satan*.

1 *Chron.* 11. 10.

Therefore, ſeeing faith is ſo great a Tower, hath ſo many Bucklers and Weapons of defence in it, and maketh ſuch mighty men in the Kingdom of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: we that dwell in this mighty fort, ſhould wonderfully rejoyce, and not eaſily be overcome, but ſet our ſelves againſt our ſelves, the world, and the whole Kingdom of Antichriſt; and learn through the power of this mighty ſhield, to make all our adverſaries whatſoever to tremble.

Verse V.

Thy two breaſts are like two young Roes that are twins: which feed among the Lillies.

As the Lord is the Father of many Children, ſo he alſo provideth a Mother for them. And ſhe hath breaſts by which ſhe nouriſheth

eth them. It is not enough to have a Child, if there be nothing to feed it: for then, for want of nouriſhment the Child muſt die.

Some ſay, that by the breaſts are meant, the Old and New Teſtament; others ſay no, becauſe in *Solomons* time, the New Teſtament was not written. Others think the Miniſters of the word are the breaſts, becauſe they are termed Nurſes: but they cannot underſtand the number; why they ſhould be ſaid to be but two.

Thoſe that by the breaſts underſtand the Old and New Teſtament, (or if you will, the Law and Goſpel) ſeem to be in the right, for the New Teſtament although it was not written in *Solomons* time, as we have it now; yet the Covenant of grace was underſtood then, and alſo pen'd by *Solomon* moſt ſweetly, as in this *Canticle* of *Solomon* doth appear.

The milk that cometh out of theſe breaſts, is conveyed into the Conſcience by the teats which pertain to the breaſts. The teats are the Miniſters and expounders of the Law and Goſpel, which are called, the teats of virginity.

Becauſe when they give the ſenſe of the word truly; faith is preſerved, and the Church is preſented a Virgin to Chriſt. But if the teats are corrupted, then the virginity of the Bride is deſtroyed: and the purity of faith is loſt. Therefore it is ſaid, in the aforeſaid Text, that when *Aholah* and *Aholiah*, (Jer- *Ezr.23.3.*

(*Jeruſalem* and *Samaria*) had committed whoredom in *Egypt*; there the breaſts were preſſed, and the teats of their virginity were bruiſed.

Theſe breaſts are ſaid to be twins, becauſe the knowledg of them are brought into the Soul both together. And alſo to be two, to ſhew that they are diſtinct: and alſo that the true Mother feedeth her Children with both the breaſts with equal reſpect. And being likened to *Roes feeding among Lillies*, it ſheweth, not that *Roes do eat Lillies*, for of all things (*as ſome write*) they eat them not; but the goodneſs of the paſture where they feed. For as in our Land we know ground to be good for feeding, when we find ſome certain ſort of graſs in it: ſo in *Jury* they knew their ground to be good; when there were ſtore of Lillies growing in it. So that there is rich feeding where the milk of theſe breaſts is drawn out; which filleth all that taſt thereof, with heavenly and Divine conſolations.

Which ſheweth us the cauſe why the Children of the Church prove ſo little, why they do not learn knowledg, nor underſtand Doctrine; but in ſtead of growing in grace, they grow in error; the reaſon is, becauſe they are weaned from the Breaſts, they never find the teat. The milk of conſolation never comes into the Conſcience for the nouriſhment of the Soul, becauſe there is a ſtoppage in the teats, that will not ſuffer the ſenſe of the word to enter.

Eſa. 28.9.

There-

Therefore the breaſts are preſſed, begin to quar, and grow ſore; becauſe the teats are bruiſed, and do not perform their Office. And hence it comes to paſs, that although the Goſpel be infinitely full of comfort and joy, ſuch joy that eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, nor hath ever entred into the heart of man to conceive: yet becauſe the ſence is not given, that the Conſcience (*which is like a ſilly Babe*) may taſte, and make application thereof; the comfort is gone, the joy is loſt.

And as the ſtoppage in the teat is one cauſe, ſo alſo the waywarneſs in the Babe is another; that will not come near the breaſts to taſt of the milk, that although the breaſts be full, and the teat be put into the mouth of it, yet it will not ſuck by any means that can be uſed. Therefore the breaſts being forſaken, and the teat deſpiſed, in ſtead of proving, it grows to be a Dwarf: it falleth into incurable diſeaſes, runneth up and down, from one Phyſician to another; and at length falleth down into Everlaſting death and condemnation.

Therefore ſeeing the paſture is ſo good, and the feeding ſo excellent, as to feed among *Likies*: it is good for every man, ſo to learn to feed that he may grow thereby. The Nurſe muſt learn how to give the teat, and alſo the infant how to receive the teat: that both may grow to a manly ſtature in Chriſtianity.

Some

Some that are Nurſes will ſuckle but with one breaſt, they give the Goſpel, but deny the Law to be of any uſe at all to a believer: theſe are not Children of the true Mother, becauſe they loſe one of the Breaſts. Others do earneſtly require the works of the Law to be done, and give not the Goſpel, but upon condition of mans obedience to the ſame: theſe deſtroy the uſe of both the Breaſts. But the true Mother giveth both the breaſts, and ſo openeth and defineth both the Law and Goſpel, that every mean capacity may underſtand it.

She conſidereth the condition of all her Children, and when ſhe findeth any in heavineſs of heart, ſhe ſuckleth them with the Goſpel; but thoſe that are hardned and preſumptuous, and think themſelves ſecure; She followeth them with the Law, to drive them to Chriſt. Therefore ſeeing the Breaſts are here commended, becauſe the Church is nouriſhed by them, and the Mother alſo in that ſhe giveth both the Breaſts; let every one in his place, learn ſo to give the Breaſt, and ſo to receive the milk, in the natural taſte of it, that the Conſcience having once caught the teat by faith, it may ſuck and be ſatisfied with Divine conſolations.

VERSE VI.

Until the day break, and the ſhadows flee away, I will get me to the Mountains of Myrrhe, and to the hill of Frankincenſe.

THeſe words ſeem to be the anſwer of Chriſt to the Churches Petition, in the laſt Verſe of the ſecond Chapter. Wherein Chriſt promiſes, that which the Church there deſireth, even to be with her *until the day break, and the ſhadows flee away.*

There are two great Mountains in man by reaſon of the fall. The one is the Mountain of preſumption, which ſtandeth in a falſe opinion of the Law: and is, by reaſon of the loſs of mans Spiritual wiſdom and underſtanding.

The other is the Mountain of diſpair, which ſtandeth in a falſe opinion of the Goſpel. For even as before a man is humbled, he preſumeth upon his own wiſdom and power, thinking thereby to accompliſh whatſoever he imagineth; and to climb up into the preſence of God: So after a man is humbled, he thinketh his ſins to be ſo many and foul, and his afflictions ſo many and great, that he cannot tell how to depend upon God for mercy and deliverance.

Now Chriſt delivereth us from theſe two Mountains by getting into two other Mountains.

The one is the *Mountain of Myrrhe*, when he deſtroyeth in us our falſe opinion of the Law; the other is *the hill of Frankincenſe*, when he teacheth us rightly to define the Goſpel.

Theſe are ſweet and pleaſant hills, becauſe of the ſweet and heavenly Poſeys that are given unto us, in theſe deliverances; and this is the proper work and office of the Goſpel, and the foundation of love and all good works to men. And this is that which Chriſt here promiſeth, and will perform, *even till the day break, and the ſhadows flee away.* From whence alſo note; *That the day will break*, the joyful morning of the Reſurrection will come; when all ſhadows, ſins, croſſes and calamities ſhall totally flee away, and everlaſting joy ſhall come, and in the mean time Chriſt is with us, in his ſweet and pleaſant Mountains: which Mountains muſt cauſe us to rejoyce and ſing. In theſe Mountains the nature of God is ſeen; and his hearty love and affection towards poor ſinners. Therefore ſeeing Chriſt our Bridegroom dwelleth in theſe ſweet and pleaſant hills, it ought to be our conſtant prayer, that he will grant us this gift that we may continually hear his word and ſubmit unto it: that we may receive the benefit and comfort of the ſame.

Thou

VERSE VII.

Thou art all fair my love, and there is no ſpot in thee.

Theſe words are fooliſhneſs to reaſon, which concludeth, when it ſeeth the godly in great miſery and affliction, in reproach and contempt of the world; that they are the fowleſt of all people, and thoſe that are in proſperity and favour with the world: to be the only people that are beloved of God. For it beholdeth nothing but the out ſide; it underſtandeth nothing of the Churches glory.

But Chriſt here pronounceth the Church to be fair and without ſpot, even then when ſhe is oppreſſed with ſhadows, ſins, ſorrows and calamities for as ſoon as ſhe humbleth her ſelf, and by faith layeth hold upon his merits: then is it pronounced in Heaven, *thou art all fair my love, and their is no ſpot in thee.* Therefore faith is the only righteouſneſs of a Chriſtian man; and the higheſt ſervice and worſhip that can be given to God, foraſmuch as it attributeth truth and faithfulneſs to him. Therefore God ſaith in anſwer to faith, becauſe thou judgeſt me faithful and counteſt me not for a Lyar; but to be true and juſt, therefore will I ſtick unto thee, and forgive thee all thy ſins; behold,

thou art all fair, and there is no ſpot in thee. Mark then and behold, that when ever thou feeleſt the Myrrhe to drop into thy underſtanding, cauſing thee to give unto God the glory of his truth, either when he deſtroyeth thy natural opinion and principles concerning righteouſneſs by the Law: or when he teacheth thee to ſcent the perfume of the heavenly Frankincenſe given thee without the Law, then know thou for certain, that the day and hour is come, that thy inward man is made beautiful with the glory of God. For then is it pronounc'd in Heaven, *thou art all fair my love, and there is no ſpot in thee.* Theſe things it behoveth us to know; that we may be certain what true Chriſtian righteouſneſs is, and when we have it, and this benefit we learn to receive, *when Chriſt getteth into the Mountain of Myrrhe, and the hill of Frankincenſe.* In the Doctrine therefore that droppeth from theſe two Mountains muſt we rejoyce and ſing; thereon muſt be the Scituation of our faith, and the riſe of all our comfort.

Then ſhall we become beautiful for Scituation, and the joy of the whole Earth; foraſmuch as where the Goſpel is received, the hearts of all men are fill'd with joy and gladneſs.

Come

VERSE VIII.

Come with me from Lebanon (my ſpouſe) with me from Lebanon: look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon ——

CHriſt having pronounc'd his Church to be fair, calleth her from thoſe people whoſe Doctrine and Society cauſeth defilement. Therefore he calleth her, *from Lebanon*, *Amana*, *Shenir and Hermon*. *Lebanon* was a Forreſt wherein dwelt the *Cananites*, *Hittites*, *Amorites*, *Perizites*, *and Jebuſites*. Which people were left to prove *Iſrael*, to know whither they would hearken to the Commandment of the Lord, which he Commanded their fathers. Which Forreſt alſo was haunted of wild beaſts. Now both the Nations that were left there, and alſo the wild beaſts that did haunt there, do ſignifie falſe Prophets; as is frequently to be ſeen in Scripture. *Jud.* 3. 3, 5. 2 *Kings.* 17. 9.

Amana was a Mountain in the Land of *Syria*, from whence *Naaman* the *Aſſyrian* came to the Prophet to be cured of his *Leproſie*, which was alſo a place of Idolatry. 2 *Kings.* 5. 18.

Shenir and *Hermon* was a Mountain poſſeſſed of old by *Og* King of *Baſhan*, where alſo the *Amorites* dwelt: which was taken away from

the two Kings of the *Amorites*, *Sihon* and
Deut. 3. *Og*, by the Children of *Israel* as *Moſes* ſheweth.

All thoſe were places of Idolatry, wherein lived ſuch people whoſe principles were againſt the Goſpel. Therefore the holy Ghoſt in the laſt clauſe of this Verſe, calleth them Dens of *Lions*, and Mountains of *Leopards:* in regard of their great enmity to the faith of Chriſt. And as it was ſaid before, it is uſual with the Holy Ghoſt, to ſet forth thoſe that are enemies to the Goſpel, under the Title of *Lions* and wild beaſts, and many other ſtrange kind of
Pſal. 57. Creatures. *David* complaineth, *his Soul was among Lions.*

And when the Lord threatned to puniſh the
Eſa. 34. Nations for their Idolatry, by giving them up to the Sword, and alſo to their own imaginations: he calleth the people that after ſhould inhabit there, by a borrowed ſpeech, an habitation of *Dragons.* And further ſaith, that the *Cormorant* (which is a foul flying over the Sea) and the *bittern* ſhall poſſeſs it, that the
Ver. 11. *Owl* and the *Raven* ſhall dwell in it; that it ſhall be an habitation of *Dragons*, and a Court for *Owles.* By theſe and ſuch other ſimilatudes the Holy Ghoſt often ſetteth forth Idoliters: which alſo ſheweth us, how little they are eſteemed in the ſight of God, and alſo, *(as it*
Eſa. 34. *follows in the Chapter)* how their meetings are
14. looked upon, and to what they are likened. The wild beaſts of the deſert, ſhall meet with

the

the wild beaſts of the Iſland, they ſhall come out of one Country to another to hold up their meetings. And the *Satyr* ſhall cry to his fellow; a wild god of the wood, a creature of divers ſhapes. And the *Shrichowl* ſhall reſt there alſo, whoſe voice is tun'd ſomething like a woman ſpeaker. Such as theſe a nation ſhall be fill'd with, when God will puniſh a people for the contempt of his word. And the great *Owl* alſo ſhall make her neſt there, and lay, and hatch, and gather under her ſhadow. This is not meant of the natural *Owl* (as I conceive) but of ſome Spiritual Father that is a gatherer; that layeth ſtrange principles, and hatcheth up others in his own opinions. *Ver.* 14.

Theſe ſorts of Creatures, (many of them) come from far, no man knows from whence; few or none of them uſe to haunt amongſt the Birds of Heaven, but uſe unhaunted and unaccuſtomed places, and by a ſtrange confuſion of Language; ſeek to undermine the faith of Chriſt. Therefore the Holy Ghoſt likeneth them here to wild beaſts, and their meetings to be but like the crying of *Satyrs*, (a kind of betwitching of little Children in the cradles) and the noiſe of *Shrichowls*, and their gatherings to be but as the laying and hatching of the *Owl*, the which nothing could be ſpoken of more contemptibly.

Now in that Chriſt calleth his Church to come from *Lebanon*, *from Amana*, *from Shenir and Hermon*; it ſheweth plainly, that where

the Goſpel is taught, the Church muſt look to be peſtered with *Sects* and *Seducers* that ſhall oppoſe the ſame. There the *Satyrs* ſhall dance and walk in divers ſhapes ſeeking to bewitch thoſe that follow them.

Thither the wild beaſts ſhall come, who ſhall run head long upon all thoſe that ſhall oppoſe them. There the *Owls* ſhall hold their Court and think by a ſtrange and an unaccuſtomed noiſe to deſtroy all at once.

Now in regard Chriſt ſaith come with me from *Lebanon*, it ſheweth, that the victory over theſe Vermin, is not to be gotten by the Law, but by Chriſt. *Sectaries* and *Seducers* teach no other way to faith and Juſtification but by their own doings; therefore the Holy Ghoſt calleth them and their followers, an habitations of *Dragons*. Now in regard (*by their principles*) they ſeek juſtification by the Law: therefore they cannot be convicted by the Law; becauſe the Law requireth obedience upon the ſame terms. Therefore Chriſt ſaith here, come with me from *Lebanon my ſpouſe*, and doubles it again, with me from *Lebanon*: that is, with my righteouſneſs and works, wherein righteouſneſs and Salvation alone is to be found.

Rev. 18.2.

The firſt point of policy in the old *Serpent* the *Devil* was to corrupt *Eve* in her faith, which thing is alſo attempted by the whole Miniſtry of *Satan*. If therefore thou hearkeneſt to that Doctrine, that by the principles of

of it, deſtroyeth faith in Chriſt: then thou art an inhabitant with the *Dragon*, and ſetled in the *Owls* neſt. Hearken we therefore to the voice of our beloved, which teacheth the active doing of the Law, in obtaining righteouſneſs before men: but gathereth all his ſheep into his fold, not by the Active, but by the Paſſive doing of the Law.

Therefore when thou heareſt from *Amana*, the active doing of the Law urged to bring thee to faith and juſtification: Look thou then from the top of *Amana*, and ſtedfaſtly believe the Goſpel; which teacheth no other preparative to faith and juſtification, but the Paſſive doing of the Law. If thou groundeſt thy faith there, then thou forſakeſt all the wild beaſts in *Lebanon*, and art ſeparated from *Amana*, *Shenir*, and *Herman*: thy being is no longer with *Dragons*, but thy Scituation is in *Mount Sion*; and the Lord is become thy habitation.

——*From the Dens of Lions, from the Mountains of Leopards.*

He calleth them *Lions* and *Leopards* becauſe falſe Prophets are deſtructive Creatures: all their Labour is to bring Souls to everlaſting ruin. And although they walk under the Title of Saints amongſt themſelves: yet the Holy Ghoſt calleth them the habitation of *Devils*,

Devils, and a cage of every unclean and hatefull Bird.

The *Den* of these *Lions* is, where men prefer their own doings beyond the Gospel. Not when the Law is truly taught, but when it is stretcht beyond its bounds and limits; when man hath an high opinion of his works, an evident sign whereof is, when the *Publican* is despised which maketh it appear, that the *Pharisee* which despiseth him trusteth in his works.

This is *the Lions Den*, and in regard there are many such people, and also such Societies that flock together into *Mountains and Dens*: into obscure places, and under a pretence of great zeal and holiness do destroy the faith of some, and danger the Seducing of others; therefore the Holy Ghost termeth them, *to Dens of Lions, and Mountains of Leopards*; and calleth the Church from those *Dens and Mountains*, because no man can live there, but first or last he shall be made a prey.

Moreover *Lions and Leopards* may signifie wicked Rulers, which are fierce, cruel, and full of rage against the Church of God; and also those of any sort that plot and contrive, how to get power in their hands to work the ruin of the people of God.

Psal. 10. 9, 10. Of such *David* speaks, that lie in wait secretly as a *Lion in his Den* to catch the poor: that crouch and will not stir nor wag (*but only cast*

caſt their eyes about) till they are certain of their prey, but as ſoon as the prey comes within their reach, they clap in their claws, and tear the poor in pieces. Theſe are like the *Leopards* alſo, which are fierce Creatures and full of ſpots. And even as the *Leopards* may be known by their ſpots, ſo alſo may theſe be known, having ſpots that make them very diſcernable. *Jer.* 13. 23.

So that a man may eaſily find where the *Leopard* hath been by his ſpots, which ſpots he cannot change; but ſheweth them whereſoever he maketh after his prey, which is always the utter ruin and deſtruction of the people of God. Now in regard Chriſt ſaith come with me, it ſheweth, that the *ſpouſe* is ſafe in his preſence; notwithſtanding theſe *Lions and Leopards.*

And ſeeing he ſaith, from the *Dens*, and from their *Mountains*; it ſheweth, that they are utterly diſowned by Chriſt, and left alone in the Kingdom of the *Devil*, where God will make uſe of them for a time for the afflicting of his Church: and afterwards will caſt them from their Mountains into Everlaſting deſtruction.

Thou

Verse IX.

Thou haſt raviſhed my heart, my Siſter, my ſpouſe; thou haſt raviſhed my heart, with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck.

The Church being obedient to the call of Chriſt, in forſaking the *Lions Dens*, and the *Leopards Mountains:* in ſeparating from *Amana, Shenir and Hermon*, and reſting her ſelf in *Mount Sion.* Chriſt here ſays, *thou haſt raviſhed my heart.* To be raviſhed, is to be overcome, and to have the heart and affection, wholly taken up by the ſight of another. This raviſhment is ſaid to come from one of the eyes, or from one look of the eyes, that is, when ſhe looketh (*after the manner of a Lover*) with indignation upon the Doctrine of falſe Teachers that do trample under foot the Goſpel, and advanceth the Goſpel from the deſtruction of the ſame.

And alſo from *one chain of the neck*, which is a right underſtanding of the Law of grace, by which Sectaries and wicked men are overthrown. So that Chriſt is raviſhed when we learn by the Goſpel to deſtroy the Kingdom of the *Devil.* And to ſhew us the certainty of it, He doubleth his ſpeech, *thou haſt raviſhed*

viſhed my heart, thou haſt raviſhed my heart; which words are written on purpoſe to draw us into the combate, and that we might not by any means Queſtion his love in ſo doing; but ſtedfaſtly through faith to embrace the ſame.

VERSE X.

How fair is thy love, my Siſter, my ſpouſe!——

THis is a note of admiration, which ſheweth, that Chriſts delight is in nothing, but that we love him, which love we ſhew when we believe his word, and endeavour by the ſame to throw down the Kingdom of the *Devil.* This is the only thing which maketh us beautiful in the ſight of Chriſt.

And when he addeth, *my ſiſter, my ſpouſe,* it comprehendeth all Divinity; ſetteth forth the nature of God to us, and the full ground of our faith. For ſeeing he ſaith, *my ſiſter,* he teacheth us, that he is really and truly our loving brother; that is naturally affected to us, careth for us in all conditions, and pityeth us in all diſtreſſes.

And ſeeing he ſaith *my ſpouſe,* he teacheth us that we are no longer twain but one. And doth

doth thereby assure us, *that he is bone of our bones, and flesh of our flesh:* and that whatsoever he hath done and suffered, is ours as really and truly, as if we had done it in our own persons.

These words therefore are full of admirable consolation, because they assure us, that Christ came into the world on purpose to own us; to take all evils from us, and to bestow all good things upon us. Which must also draw us into the use, and practise of our faith. For seeing he is our brother we should not be afraid of him, but go unto him with boldness and confidence. And seeing he is our Husband, we must be assured that he taketh from us the guilt of all our sins, and dischargeth us to his Father.

The consideration of this must also help us in all crosses and calamities: forasmuch as he cannot suffer us to want any thing we stand in need of; if we stedfastly believe in him.

But it is cursed unbelief that causeth in us a slighting and contemning of the word, and therefore we lose the good things we stand in need of; which otherwise we could not want.

How

——How much better is thy love then Wine!——

Which is as much as to ſay, I love thee far beyond all Creatures. Wine cheereth and rejoiceth the heart of man, but in that thou loveſt me with hearty affection; it is better to me then Wine is to any man. And when he ſaith, how much better! he teacheth us, that no Creature is able to ſet down the ſeveral dimenſions of his love, which paſſeth knowledge. Chriſt uſeth this paſſionate ſpeech to draw us to a good opinion of him, being written for no other purpoſe but that we might believe, for when he loveth us once, he loveth us to the end.

Theſe words therefore are chiefly to be made uſe of in times of diſtreſs, when the mind is perplexed with hard thoughts of God, when we look upon him as he is revealed in the Law: but not as he hath revealed himſelf in the Goſpel to the humbled ſinner, then are we principally to hear theſe words. For to this end Chriſt makes himſelf known to us by his word, that he might get himſelf a name in our hearts; and that we might get the victory over our unbelief. We muſt therefore believe theſe words, and then it ſhall be to us according to his word: but if otherwiſe we ſlight and contemn his word, he ſhall notwithſtanding

ſtanding find an object of his love elſe where; but we ſhall be caſt off, forſaken and deſpiſed.

——*And the ſmell of thine ointments beyond all ſpices.*

Spices by the Law were to be uſed in making the ſweet ointments for the Tabernacle; and all the veſſels thereof. Which ointments had a moſt excellent ſmell: and did ſignifie the righteouſneſs of Chriſt inherent in himſelf. Which righteouſneſs of Chriſt when it is received by faith, the ſpouſe is annointed with: and made to ſmell ſweet in the preſence of God. Theſe ointments being ſaid to be beyond all ſpices, the righteouſneſs of Faith is beyond all righteouſneſs: becauſe it ſendeth up an excellent perfume into the noſtrils of God.

Exod. 30.

And the reaſon why theſe ointments are ſo ſweet, is, becauſe they are compounded according to Art, So that no ointments are like unto them. The ointment of the Tabernacle was made of *principal ſpices:* and alſo compounded according to the Art of the Apothecary. The ointment that ſweetneth the ſpouſe, is the righteouſneſs of God and man: no compound ſo excellent. So the perfuming ſpice for the Tabernacle, was a moſt rare confection, tempered together of moſt excellent ſpices pure and holy, and alſo was made according

Exod. 30. 23.

to

to Art; and therefore it is, that it was ſo excellent.

Which ſheweth us the reaſon, why there is ſo little ſweetneſs in the World, why men ſtink like carrion in a ditch, and leave a filthy ſavour behind them, in every place whereere they come; the reaſon is, becauſe they were never perfumed with theſe ſweet and holy ointments. What profit were it in the ointments of the Sanctuary (although they were ever ſo ſweet a perfume) if none were annointed therewith? The righteouſneſs of Chriſt is a moſt excellent ſweet perfume, but what availeth this at all, to thoſe that are not anointed therewith? To thoſe that ſmell it not, the pure *Myrrhe* and the *Cinamon* is but caſt away; the ſweet *Calamus* and the *Caſſia* is but troden under foot.

Therefore we muſt learn, in time of diſtreſs of mind, to ſmell to theſe ſweet and heavenly ointments: that when the ſtink of our ſins, do caſt an ugly ſavour before God, in the Conſcience, and in the ſight of the World; yet, that then, the ſcent of theſe holy ointments, may make us a pleaſant perfume.

Now as there was an Art in compounding theſe ointments: ſo there is alſo an Art in ſmelling. And as there was no compound like unto it: ſo there was no other perfume that was to be ſmelt unto. Some there are that can ſmell no difference between theſe ointments, and the perfumes of their own compounding: *Exod.* 30. 33. 37.

theſe make not a confection after the Art of the Apothecary. And therefore it comes to paſs, that when they go about to annoint, the ſpiritual Tabernacle and his veſſels, the Candleſtick and his veſſels, to make them moſt holy, that the Lord may delight to dwell amongſt them; by annointing them with perfumes of their own compounding, they leave them in their filthineſs, and under the curſe and Everlaſting wrath of God. Therefore let us learn ſo to ſmell the heavenly perfume, that we may diſcern the ſmell thereof from all other ointments: then ſhall our afflicted Conſciences find reſt in time of diſtreſs; then ſhall the ſmell of our ointments be beyond the ſmell of all ſpices.

Verse XI.

Thy lips, O my ſpouſe! drop as the honey-comb: honey and milk are under thy tongue, and the ſmell of thy garments is like the ſmell of Lebanon.

THis is meant in regard of Doctrine, which is the chief and principal commendation of the Church. Which droppeth from *the lips of the ſpouſe*, as the rain upon the tender herb, and

and diſtilleth like the dew; inaſmuch as ſweet and pleaſant Doctrine miniſtreth grace to the hearers, not death and condemnation; but juſtification and life. Which Doctrine is like *honey from the comb:* which is the beſt of the honey. And it is added, *honey and milk are under thy tongue*; that is, in a readineſs to drop as ſoon as any occaſion is offered. *And the ſmell of thy garments as the ſmell of Lebanon*; that is, the ſcent of thy righteouſneſs, the fame and good report of thy Religion is ſweet: and ſpreadeth far abroad, *like the ſmell of Lebanon.* In which Forreſt were very many herbs and ſpices, very ſweet and pleaſant; and odoriferous trees none the like for ſweetneſs: whoſe ſcent might be ſmelled very far. This is that which God promiſeth to *Iſrael*, *his branches ſhall ſpread, his beauty ſhall be as the Olive-tree, and his ſmell as Lebanon.* Hoſ. 14.

After this manner then muſt we learn the Doctrine of Chriſt, that we may be full of matter, that our belly may be as Wine that hath no vent: and like unto new bottels of Wine that be ready to burſt, that our lips may be ready to drop upon all occaſions, *as honey from the Comb*, as rain upon the graſs: that our ſpeech may diſtil, and ſet a new face *(as it were)* upon the afflicted Conſcience, and be ſo powdered with the ſalt of the Covenant, that by our lips the earth may be ſalted.

Then ſhall it come to paſs, that thoſe that live under our ſhadow ſhall return, ſhall revive

as the corn; and grow as the vine, the ſcent thereof ſhall be as the *Wine of Lebanon.*

Verse XII.

A garden incloſed is my ſiſter, my ſpouſe: a ſpring ſhut up, a fountain ſealed.

The Church is compared to a garden chiefly and principally, in regard of the tender care that is taken for it by the owner, according to the Prophet *Eſay*, he watereth it every moment, and keepeth it night and day, leaſt any hurt it. And alſo in regard of the delight he taketh, in the flowers, herbs and trees, that are ſet and planted in it.

Eſa. 27. *Pſal.* 87. 2.

And to a *garden incloſed*, becauſe ſhe is hedged or fenced about with the promiſes of God, for the preventing of evil beaſts which otherwiſe would deſtroy her. Therefore, when the Bear cometh out of the wood, and with his paw thinketh to pull down the fence, and lay the Garden waſt: or the wild Boar out of the Forreſt with his tuſk, thinketh to root up the hedg, and the Lions roar and make a hideous noiſe againſt it; we muſt be ſure to ſee, that we underſtand the Goſpel and Chriſtian righteouſneſs ſo well, that the hedg be not broken

broken down thereby, but that the incloſure may ſtand firm and ſure.

And as we muſt look to the fence, ſo alſo we muſt ſee that the garden be well ſtor'd with all manner of precious Flowers, that the ſcent of the garden may be ſmelt: and that if any one ſhould deſire after a principal Flower, he may know where to find it. It were a ſad thing if a man ſhould come into a Garden, that hath a name above other Gardens; and ſhould deſire the Gardiner for a Poſey, and ſhould find little elſe there but common Flowers, or perhaps dead and withered Flowers. So that when (*for the very name of the Garden*) a man hath come very far, hath taken pains to ſearch into the Garden, and made him a Poſey of the choiceſt Flowers he can find: when he ſmelleth to his noſegay, the Flowers have loſt their ſcent.

This brings a kind of contempt upon the Garden, cauſing it to be of little eſteem: for when he compares his Poſey with the Flowers that grow in other Gardens, he findeth them far too ſhort both in beauty and ſmell.

When the Lord planted the Garden of *Eden*, a river went out of the garden to water the garden, and from thence it was parted into four heads, and ran into divers Lands: it ran into the Land of *Havilah*, into the Land of *Ethiopia*, into the Land of *Aſſyria*, and the river *Euphrates*. The river that watered the Lords garden, was to water the whole Earth.

The Flowers and herbs that are ſet and planted in the Lords garden, are to ſweeten the whole World.

Therefore ſeeing the Lord hath made us his garden, and fenced us with his hedg, let us learn ſo to ſtore it with rich and precious things: that if any man come to us and deſire a Poſey, we may ſhew him ſuch choice and principle flowers, that common gardens will not yield, even ſuch that will cauſe him to leave a ſcent, and caſt forth a perfume, in all places whitherſoever he goeth.

And when it is added here, *my ſiſter*, *my ſpouſe*, it is to draw all that are within the viſible Church to become the Lords garden of delight; Some gardens are for the kitching, wherein are planted only things for the belly, to feed the old man: and ſome are only for beauty and ſmell. Now Chriſt in drawing the Church to union with himſelf, to become his watered garden, when ſhe is once humbled for her ſins, mentioneth not one word of her infirmities, but mindeth her of the relations between them: that ſo by ſetting himſelf in her ſtead, he might draw her mind and cogitations, wholly to himſelf.

Which muſt well be noted of all Superiors, that have any Authority over others, and do deſire to win them to faith and obedience, which uſually take another courſe. Who (inſtead of ſhewing any favour and acceptance to their relations, although they know them

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to be truly humbled for their faults) do continually complain of their diſobedience, and no wonder if they have cauſe ſo to do. For they ſeek not to draw them by any *cords and bands of love:* but to drive them to obedience by wrath and bitterneſs. Seldom or never taking any notice of what is done: but ſtill complain for want of what is not done. They hardly ever mention the beſt things that are in them, which are worthy of praiſe; but are always uncovering and laying open their frailties and weakneſſes: and at ſuch times, and in ſuch places, as may tend moſt to their diſcomfort and diſgrace. And hence it comes to paſs, that in ſtead of winning their hearts and affections, to love and obedience: their countenance comes to be caſt down, and they are altogether heartleſs and heedleſs.

But Chriſt our Lord here giveth us another pattern, who skippeth over the worſt things that are worthy of blame in his Church: covering them all by giving himſelf unto her. Chriſt here ſpeaketh after this manner. Behold, *thou art my ſiſter, I am thy loving brother*, that do bear natural and hearty affection to thee. *Thou art my ſpouſe*, and I am thy loving Husband, I love thee with real and hearty affection. I take upon me all thy ſins and miſeries, that I might free thee from all diſtreſs: and do ſupply all thy wants that thou mighteſt live in peace and joy. And this I do on purpoſe to draw thy hearty love and affection to me, that thou

mighteſt accept of my love, and confeſs my kindneſs, and ſerve me with a willing and cheerful ſervice.

After this ſort muſt we learn alſo, to cover the faults of thoſe that are under our Authority, to hide their weakneſſes, to cover their faults, to bury their frailties, in love and kindneſs. Then ſhall we ſet our ſelves, not in the place of *Moſes*, who always chideth us for tranſgreſſions: but in the place of God, who mercifully forgiveth us our ſins, hideth and healeth all things that may diſcomfort and diſmay us.

By this means ſhall we unite their hearts to us, to love and obey us, to love and worſhip the ſame God, to be of the ſame faith, and the ſame Religion.

Queſt. But why is the Church a ſpring ſhut up, and a Fountain ſealed?

Anſ. Not that ſhe is unwilling to beſtow or impart the water of life: for out of her belly is
Joh. 7. ſaid to flow rivers of living water: But becauſe the miſtery of her Doctrine, Faith, and Religion, is ſhut up and ſealed from the blind world. For it is the wiſdom of God in a miſtery which none of the Princes of the world
1 Cor. 2. 8. know. So that the ſhutting up or hiding is in reſpect of thoſe that are loſt, that are enemies to the faith, that are ſtrangers, and will be ſtrangers from the life of God.

Not becauſe of any unwillingneſs in the Church to communicate her Doctrine, nor by reaſon

reaſon of any hardneſs in the Doctrine it ſelf; but by reaſon of that mighty oppoſition that is in man, which hindreth the underſtanding of the ſame.

This muſt comfort us to whom God hath given ſo great a treaſure, which is hid from others. And alſo learn us to uſe all care and diligence in opening of the ſpring, and unſealing of the Fountain; that if it be poſſible the eyes of the blind may be enlightned, and the ears of the deaf may be opened, which cannot be done without the key of the houſe of *David*, which is, rightly to underſtand and open the Article of juſtification: the cardinal and critical point, upon which all true underſtanding doth depend.

Now there is a double uſe of a key, to lock and to unlock: if the dore be lock'd no man can ſee what is in the houſe; but when the dore is unlock'd, then all things may be ſeen. If the Article of Juſtification be unlock'd, and mans opinion of righteouſneſs by the Law deſtroyed, then the ſpring is opened, and the fountain is unſealed; then the waters of life do run freely to poor ſinners: but if man be ſtrengthened in his own opinion of works, by a falſe underſtanding of the Law, then the fountain is ſealed, the ſpring is ſhut up, the water of life is not to be had.

Therefore Chriſt, not *Moſes*, is ſaid to have the key of the houſe of *David*, which openeth and no man ſhutteth, and ſhutteth, and no *Eſa.* 22. *Rev.* 3.7.

as the corn; and grow as the vine, the ſcent thereof ſhall be as the *Wine of Lebanon.*

Verse XII.

A garden incloſed is my ſiſter, my ſpouſe: a ſpring ſhut up, a fountain ſealed.

The Church is compared to a garden chiefly and principally, in regard of the tender care that is taken for it by the owner, according to the Prophet *Eſay*, he watereth it every moment, and keepeth it night and day, leaſt any hurt it. And alſo in regard of the delight he taketh, in the flowers, herbs and trees, that are ſet and planted in it.

Eſa. 27.

Pſal. 87. 2.

And to a *garden incloſed*, becauſe ſhe is hedged or fenced about with the promiſes of God, for the preventing of evil beaſts which otherwiſe would deſtroy her. Therefore, when the Bear cometh out of the wood, and with his paw thinketh to pull down the fence, and lay the Garden waſt: or the wild Boar out of the Forreſt with his tuſk, thinketh to root up the hedg, and the Lions roar and make a hideous noiſe againſt it; we muſt be ſure to ſee, that we underſtand the Goſpel and Chriſtian righteouſneſs ſo well, that the hedg be not broken

broken down thereby, but that the incloſure may ſtand firm and ſure.

And as we muſt look to the fence, ſo alſo we muſt ſee that the garden be well ſtor'd with all manner of precious Flowers, that the ſcent of the garden may be ſmelt: and that if any one ſhould deſire after a principal Flower, he may know where to find it. It were a ſad thing if a man ſhould come into a Garden, that hath a name above other Gardens; and ſhould deſire the Gardiner for a Poſey, and ſhould find little elſe there but common Flowers, or perhaps dead and withered Flowers. So that when (*for the very name of the Garden*) a man hath come very far, hath taken pains to ſearch into the Garden, and made him a Poſey of the choiceſt Flowers he can find: when he ſmelleth to his noſegay, the Flowers have loſt their ſcent.

This brings a kind of contempt upon the Garden, cauſing it to be of little eſteem: for when he compares his Poſey with the Flowers that grow in other Gardens, he findeth them far too ſhort both in beauty and ſmell.

When the Lord planted the Garden of *Eden*, a river went out of the garden to water the garden, and from thence it was parted into four heads, and ran into divers Lands: it ran into the Land of *Havilah*, into the Land of *Ethiopia*, into the Land of *Aſſyria*, and the river *Euphrates*. The river that watered the Lords garden, was to water the whole Earth.

The Flowers and herbs that are ſet and planted in the Lords garden, are to ſweeten the whole World.

Therefore ſeeing the Lord hath made us his garden, and fenced us with his hedg, let us learn ſo to ſtore it with rich and precious things: that if any man come to us and deſire a Poſey, we may ſhew him ſuch choice and principle flowers, that common gardens will not yield, even ſuch that will cauſe him to leave a ſcent, and caſt forth a perfume, in all places whitherſoever he goeth.

And when it is added here, *my ſiſter, my ſpouſe*, it is to draw all that are within the viſible Church to become the Lords garden of delight; Some gardens are for the kitching, wherein are planted only things for the belly, to feed the old man: and ſome are only for beauty and ſmell. Now Chriſt in drawing the Church to union with himſelf, to become his watered garden, when ſhe is once humbled for her ſins, mentioneth not one word of her infirmities, but mindeth her of the relations between them: that ſo by ſetting himſelf in her ſtead, he might draw her mind and cogitations, wholly to himſelf.

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no man openeth. The meaning is, that when the meaning of the Law is opened by the Goſpel, no diſputer can ſhut and darken it by any other interpretation: but on the contrary, when the Goſpel is opened by the Law, and the New Teſtament is taught only according to the Letter, then the ſpring is ſhut up, then the Fountain is ſealed. Therefore we muſt learn the right uſe of the key, that we may open the Law by the Goſpel, that we may give the right ſenſe and meaning of all thoſe Scriptures that ſeem to ſtand in direct oppoſition to the Doctrine of Juſtification by faith alone. Then ſhall the bleſſed Fountain of life be opened and unſealed, that thoſe for whom it is provided may drink thereof, and live for ever.

VERSE

VERSE XIII. & XIV.

Thy plants are an Orchard of Pomegranates, with pleaſant fruits, Camphire, with ſpikenard.
And Saffron, Calamus and Cynamon, with all Trees of Frankincenſe, Myrrhe and Aloes, with all the chief ſpices.

THe plants here ſpoken of, are the ſpiritual people throughout the world. Compar'd to *an Orchard*; not that they are cull'd out from others, and none ſuffered to have communion with them in Church fellowſhip, but ſuch as are truly regenerate; but in regard they bring forth much fruit, and alſo variety of fruit. And to Pomegranates, becauſe they are full of kernels as the Pomegranates be: which are pleaſant to the taſte, and delightful to behold. In this Orchard there grows alſo *Camphire* which beareth fruit in cluſters, and *Spikenard*, which ſome think to be the herb call'd *Lavender*: and *Saffron*, all which are moſt excellent for ſweetneſs. Then here is *Calamus* and *Cynamon*, which were uſed in the compoſition of the holy annointing oyl, which made perſons holy. The Frankincenſe was likewiſe uſed in making the holy incence which was to be put into the Tabernacle of the Lord to make *Exod.* 30.

make the Children of *Israel* a sweet perfume.
Psal. 45. And so likewise *Myrrhe* and *Aloes*, as all things before-named, did set forth the sweetness of the fruits of Christs death and Resurrection being given to the miserable distressed Conscience. These are the fruits that grow in the Lords Orchard, which are shewen unto us under the similitude of all those sweet and pleasant things.

Now an Orchard doth not come to be fruitful, by any thing done by the trees or plants that are set in it, but by reason of the ground wherein they are planted; which causeth them to grow and blosom, by infusing sap and moisture into the root. The plant is meerly Passive it only standeth still, and maketh no opposition, and receiveth the nourishment that cometh to it from the ground. The holy Ghost by this similitude, sheweth us, not only the fruitfulness of the Lords people; but also
Esa. 61. 11. the manner of their growth. For even as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sowen in it to spring forth, So the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before the Nations. So the Lord will do it, that is, not by requiring the Active righteousness of the Law first, for that is contrary to the similitude: but by infusing the Passive righteousness in the first place, which is, not to labour, not to take pains in doing the works of the Law;

but

but to hear and believe the voice of the Son of God. The ſum of all is this.

That the ſpiritual plants in the Lords Church, do bring forth variety of excellent fruits, in regard they grow and bloſom, after the ſimilitude of an Orchard.

And the cauſe why they grow after this manner is, becauſe the workmen in Gods Orchard, do plant and graft after the ſame form. They do not plant and graft according to their own natural way of grafting: to make men holy by works, but in a way which is contrary to nature, to make them righteous by faith. Their buſineſs lies in compounding of ointments to make perſons Holy. In ſprinkling perfuming ſpices, made after the Art of the Apothecary: that poor diſtreſſed conſciences may become fruitful in faith and all good works.

Another cauſe is, becauſe the plants themſelves are willing to become Paſſive after the manner of an Orchard. They are willing *(when Gods time is come)* to be cut out of that Olive tree which is wild by nature, and to be grafted contrary to nature into a right Olive tree. They are willing to be planted in Gods Orchard, where they muſt ſtand againſt every ſtorm, without fear of being ſhaken to pieces. So that although the winds blow, and the floods come, and the trees are ſhaken at the very roots, yet they are willing to ſtand againſt every ſtorm, and after the ſimilitude of an Or-

Orchard, even then to receive the moiſture and nouriſhment that floweth from the Goſpel, which is the ground wherein they ſtand. Now becauſe the planters plant after this form, and alſo the plants themſelves are willing to yield and conform to the ſame way of planting and grafting; therefore it is that they are fill'd with ſweet and moſt excellent fruit, otherwiſe it could never be.

This ſheweth us the reaſon, why there are ſo many plants in Gods Orchard that grow not, ſo as to bring forth any manner of choice fruit ſuitable to ſuch an Orchard, the reaſon is, becauſe they grow not after the ſame ſimilitude.

They complain that they cannot maſter their ſins, nor perform their duties, that they have not that underſtanding in the Scriptures that others have: the reaſon is becauſe they are not planted nor grafted according to the right form. They work and toil, they labour and take pains, both the planters and the plants themſelves, to grow and increaſe in the opinion of works, but bring forth none of theſe ſweet and pleaſant fruits; becauſe they are not willing to be cut and hewen down, digg'd and prun'd, and dreſſed, after the ſimilitude of an Orchard. Therefore it is, that when ſtorms come they are not able to ſtand, when calamities ariſe they are not able to endure; but one runs one way, another runs another way, to look for help and ſuccour, becauſe they have not learn'd

to

to ſtand and receive the ſap and moiſture of the Goſpel, (which is the ground from whence they grow) after the ſimilitude of an Orchard.

And hence it comes to paſs that in ſtead of bringing forth *Camphire, Spiknard, and Saffron*, which is ſweet and pleaſant fruit: they ſprout forth roots of bitterneſs, gall and wormwood. In ſtead of bearing the ſweet *Calamus*, and *Cynamon*, to make the holy annointing oyl, to make the ſpiritual Tabernacle and all the veſſels thereof holy before the Lord: and the ſweet *Frankincenſe Myrrhe* and *Aloes* to make a moſt holy and ſweet perfume; they ſend forth a noiſom fume of their own compounding, which cauſeth them moſt horribly to ſtink in the preſence of God. So that the end of their labour and pains is but this, the fruit which they think to be the only fruit that healeth the Nations, when it is rightly taſted, and the ſcent of it truly ſmelt, and compar'd with the fruits that grow in the Orchard of the Lord; it is found to be but of an evil ſavour, fruit that withereth, and comes to nothing. So long as it is look'd upon by it ſelf, the ſcent pleaſeth; but when it is compar'd with the ſweet Frankincenſe and other ſweet and principal ſpices, which are prepar'd to perfume the ſpiritual Tabernacle of the Lord and every veſſel pertaining thereunto; it is found to be nothing elſe but meat that periſheth, fruit that withereth, and the trees themſelves that bear the

the fruit to be ſuch that are marked out, to be hewn down and caſt into everlaſting fire.

Joh. 15. According to our Saviours ſaying; if a man abide not in me he is caſt forth as a branch, and is withered, and men caſt them into the fire and burn them. And every plant that my heavenly Father hath not planted ſhall be rooted up.

Therefore, ſeeing it is the commendation of the Church in this place, in that ſhe is like unto an Orchard of ſuch ſweet and pleaſant fruits, in that ſhe receiveth her ſelf, and bringeth forth, and as an inſtrument conveyeth, the ſweet and pleaſant fruits of Chriſts death and Reſurrection, into the hearts and Conſciences of others, that they may be fill'd with all the chief ſpices, and be ſo becenſed and perfumed therewith, as to become a ſweet ſavour unto God in every place, let us alſo endeavour to be fill'd, with all theſe chief and principal ſpices, that we may know what to do in the time of tribulation and great diſtreſs, when we feel the terrors of the Almighty; and begin to be ſore afraid, when we can ſee no way nor means of deliverance, but the tree ſeems to be blaſted, and all hope of fruit to be loſt, yet then let us conſider, that we are plants in Gods Orchard, where we muſt ſtand againſt every ſtorm, ſo that although the winds blow, and ſtorms come and we are even ſhaken at the very roots; yet there muſt we ſtand and receive the ſap and nouriſhment of the Goſpel,

Goſpel; which ſpeaketh comfortable words to the miſerable ſoul.

And not only ſo, but alſo that we may be able to anoint and perfume diſtreſſed minds, that a poor diſtreſſed Conſcience may be comforted by us in a ſad condition, that the cluſter of *Camphire* may appear in the Conſcience: *that the ſcent of the Calamus and Cynamon may be ſmelt, and the Spikenard, Myrrhe and Frankincenſe, may become as a Poſey to refreſh the ſpiritual ſenſes, under the apprehenſion of Sin and the wrath of God.*

Then ſhall it become apparent, that we are the trees of *Frankincenſe* here ſpoken of, filled with the kernels of the *Pomegranates*, and rightly planted in the Orchard of God.

VERSE XV.

A Fountain of Gardens, a well of living waters, and ſtreams from Lebanon.

IN the twelfth Verſe of this Chapter, the Church is ſaid to be a fountain Sealed, in this Verſe ſhe is ſaid to be *a Fountain of Gardens*, that is, a fountain opened to water gardens. When the Church is compar'd to a garden in the ſingular Number, underſtand the univerſal Church: but when ſhe is compar'd

to gardens, as here, it meaneth every particular Church, and every particular member in each Church.

Quæſt. A fountain ſealed, and a fountain opened, ſeemeth at firſt ſight to be a contradiction, for if ſhe be a fountain to water gardens, how then is ſhe a fountain ſealed?

Anſ. The anſwer is, ſhe is a fountain ſealed to thoſe that are contemners of the Goſpel, according to that ſaying in the Prophecy of *Eſai.*

The viſion of all, is become unto you, as the words of a Book that is ſealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, ſaying, read this, and he ſaith I cannot becauſe it is ſealed. So that although the Doctrine of the Goſpel be plain, and eaſy in it ſelf, and very ſweet and comfortable, yet where mans wiſdom ruleth, it cannot poſſibly be underſtood, but remains a miſtery hid and ſealed. Therefore it is no wonder to ſee great Clerks, men of excellent parts and learning, that cannot read the Book, that cannot underſtand any thing of the miſtery of the Kingdom of Heaven: the reaſon is, becauſe to them the ſpring is ſhut up, and the fountain is ſealed, for their horrible deſpiſing and contemning of the ſame.

And ſo on the contrary, ſhe is a fountain ſet open to water gardens, to refreſh and ſatisfy, *every hungry and thirſty Soul.* According to that in the Prophecy of *Zachary*, in that day there ſhall be a fountain ſet open for ſin, and

and for uncleaneſs. So that to every one that is weary and heavy laden with the burden of his ſins; ſhe breaketh the bread, and poureth forth the water of life freely.

Now ſeeing the Lord hath made us his fountain we muſt endeavour to be full, to be of ſome deepneſs, that if any man come to draw the water of life, the fountain may not be empty; underſtanding is a well-ſpring of life, and a ſpring always runneth. The labour of the Church is to break up fountains. *As they go through the valley of Baca they make a well.* *Pſal.* 84. *And the promiſe of God is to open the ſpring, to make fountains in the valleys, and pools in the wilderneſs.* *Eſa.* 41. 18. Therefore let us receive of his fulneſs, that if any man come with his Bucket, to have a taſt of the living water, he may not have a ſcantling; but may be ſure to have him fill'd.

And as we muſt be full, ſo alſo muſt we be willing to water gardens. The Lord hath paſſed by wiſdom and learning, and men of excellent parts and abilities in nature, and choſen poor, ignorant, deſpiſed, hungry and thirſty ſinners, to break up fountains; but to what end and purpoſe? Why hath the Lord hid the myſtery of the Kingdom of Heaven from the wiſe and prudent, and reveal'd it unto Babes? Even becauſe it ſo pleaſeth him; and alſo that the gardens may be watered.

The Lord hath promiſed to make the wilderneſs like *Eden*, and the deſert like the garden *Eſa.* 51. 3.

of the Lord. And a river ran out of *Eden*
Gen. 2. 10. to water the whole earth. Therefore let us learn to answer the similitude, to see that the fountain be full, and always running. If the gardens be not watered, what shall become of the flowers? And some flowers are more choice and principal then others, that give a greater scent, and are the very glory of the garden, if those should die, the beauty of the garden would be lost. Therefore, when the sun begins to shine hot upon the garden, and the flowers begin to be at a stand: when afflictions and great distresses, begin to draw on, when the ground begins to be dry and parched; then let us open the fountain, and pour out the
Es. 35. 7. water of life, that so the parched ground may become a pool, and the thirsty Land springs of water.

Next the Church is said to be a well of living waters.

Rev. 22. This River or well is said to be pure, and clear, and to proceed out of the Throne of God, and of the Lamb. Pure in respect of the nature of it, it being nothing but the righteousness of Christ given to the unworthy. Clear in respect of the brightness or the light of it, it being clearly to be understood. And proceeding (in respect of the Original of it) out of the Throne of God, and of the Lamb.

There is a double Throne in Heaven, a Throne of Justice, and a Throne of mercy.

The

The Throne of Juſtice is the Fathers Throne, and the Throne of mercy, is the ſons Throne. And there is a double Throne to be ſet in the Conſcience by the Preaching of the Goſpel. The Throne of God, and the Throne of the Lamb. The well of living waters do proceed out of both theſe Thrones. So that the water of life can never run into the Conſcience; unleſs it be arraigned, and brought in order before both theſe Thrones. For this is the promiſe of Chriſt, to him that overcometh, will I grant to ſit down with me in my Throne: even as I overcame and am ſet down with the Father in his Throne. Rev. 3. 21.

Now to overcome is to be delivered, diſcharged, and acquitted, (when the Conſcience is arraigned) from the Fathers Throne. For mark it, Chriſt entered combat with the Law, ſin, death and Satan, and overcame, but how? Even by ſubmitting himſelf to the curſe and condemnation of them all, (which although unjuſt in reſpect of Chriſts innocent perſon, yet were all juſt in reſpect of us) and by his Reſurrection from the dead through the power of his Godhead he overcame, and received a full diſcharge from all our ſins, which he took in our name and keepeth for our uſe. By reaſon of which victory Chriſt is ſate down with the Father in his Throne.

After the ſame manner alſo we muſt overcome, and ſit down with Chriſt in his Throne, even by ſubmitting to the Office and condemn-

ing power of the Law, which revealeth our ſin, and condemneth our ſuppoſed wiſdom and righteouſneſs: then it is granted to us to ſit down with Chriſt in his Throne. This river then (or well of living waters) bringeth us, Firſt, before the jugdment ſeat, condemning us before the fathers Throne: next, it leadeth us before the mercy ſeat, and ſetteth us down in the Sons Throne; giving us the victory which Chriſt hath purchaſed for us.

Eze. 47. Therefore it is ſaid, that every thing that moveth whereſoever this River cometh ſhall live. That is, that moveth through faith, firſt, before the judgment ſeat, where it is condemned for ſin; next, before the mercy ſeat; where it is juſtified through grace. The benefit of this River runneth not to thoſe that are full rich, and mighty in their own imagination; but to thoſe only that confeſs their Sin.

Learn we then firſt by faith, to humble our ſelves before the Fathers Throne; then ſhall it preſently be granted unto us, to ſit down with Chriſt in his Throne.

Laſtly, the Church is compar'd to ſtreams from *Lebanon*, having ſome alluſion (as ſome think) to the ſtreams of *Jordan* which began at the foot of Mount *Lebanon*, and ran along through the holy Land to water the ſame. And alſo to the Sanctuary; which was built of the *Cedars* of *Lebanon*. So that the ſtreams of this River do water the holy Land. The

waters

waters iſſuing out of the Sanctuary, do run into the deſert, and refreſh the weary and the ſolitary place. The water in this River, runneth not to the high and mighty in their own eyes, but to the poor and miſerable that are forſaken of the Law: they only refreſh themſelves with theſe pure and holy ſtreams; when *the rich are ſent empty away.*

VERSE XVI.

Awake, thou North-wind and come thou South-wind, and blow upon my Garden, that the ſpices thereof may flow out; let my beloved come into his Garden, and eat his pleaſant fruits.

BY the *North* and *South-winds* are meant Doctrine, for ſo the *winds* do uſually ſignify in Scripture. And ſeeing they are of contrary qualities, they ſignify the Doctrine of the Law, and the Doctrine of the Goſpel. The *North-wind* is uſually cold and dry, and maketh us ſenſible when we feel the blaſt of it, that's the Doctrine of the Law: which being truly opened and applyed, maketh us very cold,

revealeth unto us our ſin, dryeth up all the wiſdom and righteouſneſs that is within us, blaſteth it and bringeth it to nothing. Therefore Chriſt here appointeth the *North-wind* to awake; that is, *to awake the ſpouſe.*

Now when the *North-wind* hath done blowing, Chriſt here Commandeth the *South-wind* to blow, which is of a contrary quality, hot and moiſt, very ſweet and full of content. This ſignifieth the Doctrine of the Goſpel. By which we underſtand, that when the Law hath done its Office in condemning us, and we are made ſenſible of our guiltineſs before God, it is the will of Chriſt; that we hear and apply our ſelves to the Goſpel. When by the blowing of the *North-wind* thoſe fruits that grow naturally are blaſted; then we muſt deſire for the blowing of the *South-wind.* When ever the winds do blow after this manner, in order upon the garden, then the ſpices thereof begin to flow out, then the light of the Goſpel begins to ſhine in the Conſcience, and men are hot or cold according to the quality of the wind that blows. When the *North-wind* blows we are cold in reſpect of the righteouſneſs of the Law; and when the *South-wind* blows hot and comfortable in reſpect of the righteouſneſs of the Goſpel. Both theſe winds we muſt have an equal reſpect unto, and obſerve a right diſtinction between them, otherwiſe we may take

take that for the *South-wind* which comes to ſhort of the South by many points: and that for the *North-wind* which is as many points to wide of the North, and ſo fruits of the garden *(for want of a right diſtinction between the winds, and a right knowledg of the compaſs)* may receive a blaſt and be utterly ruin'd. This I conceive was the ſin of the Church of *Laodicea*, in that ſhe was neither hot nor cold, ſhe neither underſtood the Law nor the Goſpel: had ſhe been hot, or cold, ſhe had been well, either would have ſerved for her commendation becauſe they are never alone. But becauſe ſhe could not make an exact diſtinction betwixt the *North and South-winds*, therefore ſhe was neither hot nor cold, but luke warm, and for that cauſe Chriſt ſaith, *I will ſpue the out of my mouth.*

And therefore it is that Chriſt alſo wiſheth, *I would thou wert either cold or hot, for then ſhe had been in a right Condition.* As if Chriſt had ſaid this. If thou wert awakened by the *North-wind*, then the *South-wind* ſhould blow in thy Conſcience: and if the *South-wind* did blow in thy Conſcience, then ſhould'ſt thou rightly underſtand how to follow the *North-wind* in thy Life. Where theſe winds of Heaven do after this manner blow, the uſe and office of the Law and Goſpel is rightly Taught, and the reaſon of all good works is perceived, *then the ſpices of the Garden do flow out:*

out: but when the Law is ſtretched beyond its limits, or the Goſpel turn'd into the Law, then men are neither *hot nor cold*, *but luke warm*, and under the ſame dreadful and heavy Sentence of Chriſt which can never be revoked; *I will ſpue thee out of my mouth for ever.*

This thing is neceſſary to be underſtood of all men, eſpecially of the Angels of the Churches, that are the holders of the winds of Heaven and are to blow upon the garden of Chriſt, for if they ſhould not underſtand the contrary nature and quality of theſe winds, in ſtead of cauſing the ſpices to flow out: they may by a contrary wind cauſe a blaſt to come upon the garden to the ſpoil and utter ruin of all the fruits. For want of a right diſtinction between the nature of theſe winds, it oftentimes comes to paſs, that ſo many winds of Doctrine are blown about, that many are thereby blown into Everlaſting deſtruction.

In the next words here is a prayer of the Church wherein ſhe deſireth her beloved to come into his Garden, and eat his pleaſant fruits.

Queſt. Two things are hence to be inquired. Firſt, What is meant by eating. Secondly, What is meant by pleaſant fruits.

In

In anſwer, to the firſt obſerve, that eating in Divinity ſignifies union, whither it be on Chriſt part; or on our part. Chriſt is ſaid to eat, when he takes upon himſelf all our ſins and miſeries, as if they were his own, and undertakes for them, and alſo to ſwallow up and conſume all the miſerable effects of ſin; which we either feel or fear. *Anſ.*

Our eating is, when we firmly believe, that Chriſt joineth himſelf unto us; feeleth our preſent infirmities, and careth for us. Therefore it is often ſaid when ſpeech is made of our union with Chriſt, *he that eateth me ſhall live by me.* *Joh. 6.*

And except ye eat the fleſh of the ſon of man ye have no life in you; all which ſetteth forth our union with Chriſt by faith alone.

And by fruits here, ſhe meaneth the fruits of his death and Reſurrection, which is freedom and liberty to poor ſinners. *Theſe are called his fruits*, becauſe freedom from ſin, and deliverance from Everlaſting Condemnation, are purchaſed by him. *And his pleaſant fruits*, becauſe when we believe that Chriſt owneth us, and taketh away our ſins and miſeries from us, Chriſt rejoyceth and is ſatisfied. So that the meaning of the Churches requeſt here is, this. *Eſa.* 53. 11.

That Chriſt would take from her all her ſins and miſeries, which ſhe feeleth and feareth:

eth: and give unto her all thoſe bleſſings and favours that he hath purchaſed for poor ſinners.

In that ſhe calleth theſe his pleaſant fruits, acknowledging it to be Chriſts delight to grant her requeſt, this ſheweth her faith in Chriſt.

And although it be very delightful to Chriſt to hear her requeſt: yet her deſire is prevented before hand by reaſon of her faith, as appears by the next words.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

VERSE I.

I am come into my Garden, my Siſter my Spouſe ——

WHICH words contain the anſwer of Chriſt to the faith of his Church, for in theſe words he doth not ſay I will come, according to her requeſt: but I am come, according to her faith going before. Which alſo ſheweth us the meaning of the Prophet when he ſaith, *before they call I will anſwer.* And yet he willeth us to call upon him, for all things which he promiſeth to beſtow: becauſe Prayer muſt put in execution the decree of God, concerning what he hath promiſed to give us; neither can we chuſe but pray, as ſoon as we believe.

After the ſame manner ſhall it be to us, as with the Church here, when we believe and confeſs, that it is Chriſts delight to help us, and to our faith do joyn Prayer: when we can pray unto God for Chriſt his ſake to ſhew mercy to us, to bear our burdens, to carry our ſorrows,

rows, to come down into his garden and own us: then doth Christ speak the same word to us, as he doth to the Church in this place, I am come into *my Garden, my Sister, my Spouse.* By which we see, that Christ cometh to us before we are aware, for as soon as we believe the benefits of Christs death and Resurrection to be given to us, that are most unworthy of the same: our faith incloseth Christ, as a Jewel is incloſed in a Ring, then doth Christ say unto us, *I am come my Sister, my Spouse.* Neither could he possibly say otherwise, forasmuch as he hath made over himself and all that he hath, to that person that believeth.

This is a rare and Heavenly mistery, which whosoever understandeth; shall quickly find that of Christ, which he never knew before. Thus Christ was present to the *Patriarchs* of old, as soon as they believed, *Abraham* by faith, saw his day and rejoyced. He had not only faith, but also a sence of faith, which was bred in him by a certain knowledg of the righteousnes of Christ imputed. So all the holy Fathers, that rightly understood the figures and shadows, had Christ present in spirit, as soon as they believed: the use of a figure being to represent something to faith, which is absent to sense and reason. So Baptism which is a figure, hath Christ present, as soon as we hear and believe that we are buried with Christ in Baptism, and also assureth us of our communion with him.

Heb. 10.1, 9, 19, 20.

Rom. 6.

And

And it is impoſſible (as was ſaid before) that it ſhould be otherwiſe, foraſmuch as all things being eſtabliſhed in faith: Chriſt cannot be abſent, where faith is preſent. No man by his works can poſſibly obtain this union, becauſe no work can cleave unto the word of God; but faith attaineth, poſſeſſeth and enjoyeth Chriſt for ever, becauſe all things in Heaven and Earth are given to them that believe. *Mary took pains in ſeeking after Chriſt, ſhe went to the Sepulchre, ſhe wept becauſe ſhe could not find him: and why could ſhe not find him? Becauſe ſhe ſought him where he was not to be found, ſhe ſought him in the Sepulchre, the living amongſt the dead: but as ſoon as Chriſt ſaid Mary, ſhe ſaid unto him* Rabboni. *Chriſt incloſed Mary by his word: and Mary by her faith incloſed him.*

After the ſame manner Chriſt wrappeth us up in his word, when he giveth himſelf and all that he hath unto us: and we after the ſame manner, do incloſe and wrap up Chriſt and all his merits within us by faith. So when we come to the Lords Supper, Chriſt is Spiritually preſent in theſe words, this cup is the new Teſtament in my blood which is ſhed for you, now he that feeling his own miſerable condition, can give ſo much credit to the word of God, as to believe, that under the figure of the cup the New Teſtament is given, to his own poor Soul in particular, that's the perſon to whom Chriſt is then come.

There-

Therefore, when the Law condemneth us of right, and by juſt deſert, and we are griev'd and burthened with our miſery; and do feel our wants and would have a ſupply, then muſt we fly to the Goſpel for help and ſuccour, and chiefly to our Baptiſm; which aſſureth us, (if we learn it well) that Chriſt by his promiſes is preſent, to rid us of all evils, and to ſupply us in all our wants. This conſideration freeth us from condemnation, becauſe we are under the ſign and ſeal of abſolution and remiſſion of ſins. And thus Baptiſm is the figure that ſaveth us. The Law condemneth, and the Conſcience accuſeth, but faith bringeth into the mind the right uſe of the ſign and ſeal of abſolution and forgiveneſs. To ſeek for Chriſt in our works, is with *Mary* to ſeek him in the Sepulchre, where he cannot be found, and to look for a Chriſt yet to come. For holineſs of life is yet to come, cannot be preſent in this miſerable fleſh, but is ſtill to be waited for. Now if we cannot apprehend Chriſts ſpiritual preſence to be with us, until we are better ſanctified: then we can never apprehend him to be come at all. Foraſmuch as a better degree of Sanctification is yet to come, and ſtill will be to come ſo long as we are on this ſide Heaven. Learn we then firmly to believe the word of Chriſt and to deny our ſelves, and call up on his name, then ſhall we feel to our comfort that Chriſt is ſpiritually come to us, according as Chriſt ſays here to his ſpouſe, *I am come.*

Next

Next here, Chriſt calleth his Church his *ſiſter and ſpouſe*. Which words are often uſed in this Song to draw the Church to this holy faith and confeſſion, and are alſo full of faith and conſolation. For if Chriſt doth own us for his *ſiſter and ſpouſe*, then is he our brother and husband.

Therefore theſe words *my ſpouſe*, muſt teach us to believe, and to claim theſe benefits that belong to the ſpouſe. For the wife ſo long as the husband liveth, is free and out of danger by reaſon of the Marriage knot. Now Chriſt liveth for ever for he being raiſed from the dead dyeth no more. Therefore all evils *Rom. 6.* that oppreſs and trouble us, muſt die and vaniſh away. For either Chriſt muſt die and depart the Conſcience, or elſe ſin and the curſe muſt *Rom. 6. 9.* die: not Chriſt, *therefore the curſe*. Therefore, *Chriſt himſelf ſaith, I am he that liveth, and was Rev. 1. dead, and behold I am alive for evermore.* And when he ſays *my ſiſter*, he draweth us to believe, that he is our loving brother, and if ſo, then alſo is God our Father. Now if God be our Father then it muſt needs follow that we are the Children of God, and after this manner we muſt learn to receive the Spirit of adoption, even by hearing of the word of faith. The true effects of the Spirit of adoption cannot be found, till the ſpirit be received: which is not given nor received, by the requiring of works, but by the hearing of faith Preached.

——I have gathered my Myrrhe with my ſpice, I have eaten my Honey-comb with my Honey: I have drunk my Wine with my Milk——

In theſe words Chriſt further amplifies his anſwer to the faith and requeſt of his Church, and ſays, *I have gathered*, that is, *I have reaped the fruits for which I came down from Heaven for, which was to draw a people to believe in me that they might be ſaved.* From whence we may ſee, that as ſoon as we are willing that Chriſt ſhould eaſe us of all our ſins and miſeries, and make a gratious ſupply of all our wants, then do we prepare a diſh of pleaſant fruits for Chriſt: this is that which he here calleth *his Myrrhe and his Spice, his Wine and his Milk*, becauſe as thoſe things are ſweet and do much refreſh the ſenſes of men; So alſo is it ſweet to Chriſt to take away from us, our ſins and burthens, cares, croſſes and calamities.

Moreover when Chriſt alſo ſaith here, that he hath *eaten his honey comb with his honey*, it muſt well be noted, for he *eateth his honey comb with his own honey.* The comb is the Houſe of the Bee which holdeth the honey, which honey although it be ſweet for the Bee to feed on, yet the comb is reſpected of the Bee firſt, before the honey, for the Bee by a natural inſtinct delighteth in the comb, having no other houſe

houſe nor reſting place, to rejoyce it ſelf in, and ſet its heart upon but only the comb: which although it hath no ſweetneſs in it of it ſelf, before it be ſweetned by the labour of the Bee, yet for the natural pleaſure he taketh in it, more then in all things in the World beſides; he maketh it his habitation and place of abode, ſo that there is an Antecedent natural inſtinct in the Bee, Firſt *to the comb, and then to feed upon the honey in the comb.*

Now underſtand by the comb, the perſon that holdeth and carryeth the honey, and by the honey the righteouſneſs of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt that ſweetneth the comb, and by *eating his honey comb with his own honey*, his joyning himſelf to our ſinful perſon becauſe he loved us, before it was ſweetned with any honey of ours. Chriſt then loveth the perſon, Firſt, before the work or new quality of the perſon, Firſt, he chuſeth an habitation to dwell in, before he ſweetneth the comb with his hony-comb, and this is our poor diſtreſſed perſon, which he ſetteth his heart upon from all Eternity, as the only object of his joy and delight, and therefore we are ſaid to love him becauſe he loved us firſt, and this is called his firſt love, which was the love of Chriſt firſt to the perſon of the Church of *Epheſus* before her works, which apprehenſion in the falling ſtate of that Church came at laſt to be loſt. *Rev.* 2.4.

This is his Antecedent love, and when it is ſaid in the ſixteenth of *John* the *Father himſelf loveth you becauſe ye have loved me, as though the Father had firſt reſpect to the honey and then to the comb*, it meaneth his conſequent love; for as ſoon as we receive our firſt love, which is to believe that he loveth our ſinful perſon, then doth he love our obedience with a conſequent love, and maketh promiſes accordingly to thoſe that love him, fear him, obey him, and keep his Commandments.

It follows therefore, that all thoſe that are imployed in the garden of the Lord, about the making and ſweetning of honey combs muſt endeavour to imitate the Bee, firſt in making of the comb, next, in gathering of honey and conveying it into the comb. If the comb be not firſt reſpected there can be no honey, then muſt the Bees die for want of food. Nor is there any other way to make perſons holy; firſt, but by teaching us to believe that Chriſt loveth us from all Eternity. Where this perſwaſion is grounded, *honey dews will fall*, for why ſhould the Bee labour to make the comb, if it were not his purpoſe to fill it with honey? Why ſhould the Lord Jeſus Chriſt marry our ſinful perſon to himſelf, if it were not to ſweeten and perfume it with an Odour fit for himſelf?

And as the comb muſt firſt be made, ſo muſt we ſee that it be well ſtored with honey, which muſt

muſt be gathered with the Bee out of every flower, and where ever the honey dew falls, the Bees will find it out, mark we then where the cowſlips, the flowers and the honey ſuckles grow, for thoſe are the places where the Bees find honey, and if any dew fall there we ſhall find it; and when ſuch dews come the Bees will lade themſelves, and when they have their lading they carry it to their combs: if the Bees ſhould gather ever ſo much honey and had not the Art to carry it into the combs, what profit ſhould the owner of the Bees receive?

If the Miniſters of the Goſpel ſhould have their full lading of honey, and had not the Art to convey it into the Conſciences of men to make perſons holy, who were the better for it? Some there are that cannot endure the taſt of the hony ſuch can never ſweeten the comb: but are like waſps that rob the Bees and make honey ſcarce.

Therefore let all thoſe that are labourers for God endeavour ſo to be fill'd with the knowledg of the Goſpel, that they may be able to ſet down the true way to attain to the righteouſneſs of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and all grounds of encouragment to receive it, according to Chriſt in the next words.

——Eat O friends, drink yea drink abundantly my well beloved.

To eat in Divinity is to be joyned to the
Joh. 6. 54. Gospel by faith, and whosoever eateth hath
Everlasting life. Now the Gospel (that we may
Mat. 11. learn rightly to eat) teacheth us three prin-
27. cipal points.

First, it teacheth the true understanding of
Act. 5. 22. the Law, which revealeth sin to the Con-
Rom. 3. 10, 11. 12. science, whereby all men are convicted; and
that mans natural opinion, that obedience to
Rom. 3. 21, 22. the Law is the condition of the promises may
be destroyed and requireth our faith in this
point, and also giveth and worketh in us the
same.

Secondly, the Gospel teacheth us that the
righteousnes of Christ is freely given to them
Rom. 4. 2, 3. only, where that opinion of righteousnes
is destroyed, and also requireth our faith in
this point, and worketh in us the same.

Thirdly, it requireth us to perform all good
Phil. 3. 3, 8, 9. works towards men without any dependance
upon them, and causeth us to perform the same
Phil. 3. 4. with joy and gladnes.

These are the principal things taught in the
the Gospel, and the principal Doctrines con-
tained in both Sacraments. And where these
three points are taught, there the Sacraments
(or the Gospel) are rightly taught. Therefore
when

when Chriſt ſays eat, he requireth that the Goſpel be made known, that we may be joyned unto him in theſe three points.

Eat O friends. Some think that open groſs ſinners are not invited to eat, let ſuch conſider of the firſt point before named: and ſhew how they ſhall be convicted, and have their ſins deſtroyed, if they muſt not eat.

Secondly, others think that by friends here, *(and in other places of Scripture)* Chriſt meaneth thoſe that ſtrive much about the Law and works, and require a neceſſity of doing to obtain the promiſes. Let ſuch conſider of the ſecond point before named, and ſhew how the friendſhip comes in that way, and ſee what need they have to eat.

Laſtly, ſome are affraid to eat, becauſe they are unworthy by reaſon of ſinful works. But the diſcontent of theſe in the want of works, ſhews, that they do depend upon works, therefore ſuch muſt examine themſelves by the third point, and they ſhall find, that they alſo, have great need to eat for the deſtroying of that opinion in them.

We ſee then that all ſorts of people have need to eat. Open groſs ſinners, and thoſe that are righteous in their own eyes, and alſo thoſe that are fearful at their own unworthineſs.

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Quest. But why doth Christ call all that are invited his friends? When they are not all reconcil'd to him?

Ans. I answer, because there is no enmity remaining on Gods part, Christ having slain the enmity: the enmity is on our part. God is reconciled to us through the death of his Son, but we are not reconciled to God. Now God being reconciled, sendeth the Gospel *(which is the word of reconciliation)* to publish the same: wherein he calleth us friends, on purpose to woo and invite us to himself.

Eph. 2. 15.

2 *Cro.* 5. 19, 20.

And if we receive the Gospel, then there is no difference between God and us, but if we despise his bounty, and will not have his merits, then are we his enemies. Neither doth God account any for his enemies, but those that refuse to have life and salvation by that new and living way which he hath appointed. This news is brought unto us by the Gospel, by which Doctrine the Law is opened, which sheweth us, as in a glass our miserable and wretched condition; and that Christ came to purchase deliverance for us; and to bring it into our Consciences, that we might serve him with cheerfulness all the days of our lives. This is the feast he provideth, and biddeth us eat, which is, to make a right application of the Law and Gospel in order as aforesaid. And calleth us friends, because the Gospel maketh us friends. And biddeth us drink also, because he would assure us hereby of his real

and

and hearty good will to us: and that he giveth to us freely of the *bread and water of life.* And to drink abundantly, to ſhew that he doth not grudge us any thing that he hath purchaſed for poor ſinners: or that might beget in us a good opinion of himſelf towards us. And telleth us that we are his wel-beloved, as much beloved, as ever were any upon the face of the earth, that his heart is upon us, and his care for us; and that he cannot, nor will not, ever be wanting to us.

Theſe things are written on purpoſe that we might believe, and that we might have no other opinion of God but according to theſe words: that we might acknowledg him to be free and bountiful to us and our God. Such a faith can never want any help or protection that is in God. Heaven and Earth, yea the whole Creation ſhall work together to accompliſh what is wanting for the believing man. Let us ſee therefore, that we believe the Goſpel to be no other Doctrine, but that which deſtroyeth the opinion in us, of all worth in our ſelves, and that poureth forth unto us of the bounty and loving kindneſs of God moſt freely; that we might ſerve him with a willing ſervice. Thoſe that define the Goſpel any otherwiſe, do ſet forth a ſtrange God; by extolling the righteouſneſs in man; which is but to bleſs an Idol of their own brain.

And let us alſo ſee that we join our ſelves to the Goſpel, and count it great riches to behold

behold our ſpiritual poverty, and to have our filthy rags to be taken from us, and the beſt robe to be put upon us: that we may do good works (not in fear) but with joyfulneſs, then ſhall we rightly eat the fleſh, and drink the blood of the Son of God, and have eternal life through his name.

And ſeeing he calleth us friends, being reconciled to us, let us alſo be reconciled to him, and not be offended. And whatſoever we want let us aske it of him, who can deny us nothing becauſe he is our friend. And ſeeing he bideth us drink, and drink abondantly, let us be ſure that what ever is promiſed in the Goſpel is certainly ours as if we had it in preſent poſſeſſion. And ſith he telleth us that we are his welbeloved let us believe him, and never queſtion his love to us any more; and what calamities ſoever we meet with in this World, let us be ſure (*although they are tedious and irkſom to the fleſh to indure*) they are for nothing but to manifeſt, his free and everlaſting love to us. What remaineth then? Seeing Chriſt is ſo willing, ſo free, ſo full of bounty and loving kindneſs to us, but that we ſtore our ſelves with rich and heavenly proviſion againſt a rainy day. In this world we ſhall ſee little appearance of any thing but *Satan*, uſing all Art and skill by his inſtruments, to take away our peace, and blaſt our comforts: and many times hath great power given him ſo to do, therefore he attempteth to devour us, which

which he knoweth he cannot do unleſs he can deſtroy our faith, and deprive us of our Chriſt: therefore we had need to eat and drink abundantly of this heavenly proviſion, that when we feel our ſelves oppreſſed with the tribulations of the world, and malice of *Satan*; we may be ſo ſtrong in the Lord and in the power of his might, that we may be able to conquer all our ſpiritual enemies.

VERSE II.

I ſleep, but my heart waketh——

THeſe words are the voice of the Church, who when ſhe heareth Chriſt pour out himſelf ſo abundantly to her, falleth *aſleep*. Sleep is a reſt or ceaſing from the uſe of the outward ſenſes: and in this place ſignifies the ſilencing of ſenſe and reaſon in the uſe and exerciſe of faith. For when Chriſt biddeth her *(in the former verſe)* eat and drink abundantly, he promiſeth all things, both for this life, and the life to come; yet notwithſtanding ſhe ſeeth not how, nor which way thoſe promiſes ſhall be accompliſhed, for the word ſeemeth to promiſe incredible things to reaſon, as that *Abraham* ſhall have a Son in his old age contrary

contrary to nature, that *Sarah* ſhall bring forth *the promiſed ſeed, when ſhe is paſt Child bearing.* Alſo it ſetteth forth unto us, that *Iſaac* muſt be offer'd; and yet in him all Nations ſhall be bleſſed.

Moreover it promiſeth help to the afflicted, when no means appeareth, how or which way deliverance ſhall come: but in ſtead of apprehending any help or deliverance according to ſenſe and reaſon, there ſhall nothing appear but utter ruin and deſtruction. In this condition *the Bride falleth aſleep*, ſhe is content to have ſenſe and reaſon ſilenc'd, and to be ſtricken dumb, and ſhe is not diſcouraged; but conſtantly dependeth upon the promiſes of God. And therefore ſhe ſays here, *I ſleep, but mine heart waketh.* I ſleep in regard of ſenſe and reaſon; but my heart awaketh in reſpect of God and his promiſes. And this is alſo the meaning of *David* when he ſays, he giveth his beloved *ſleep*, or by *ſleep. So that when the Bride doth thus begin to ſleep: then doth ſhe begin to awake, and live by faith in the promiſes of God.*

After the ſame manner muſt we with the Bride fall into this holy ſleep, and be contented to live in the uſe and practice of faith. For every man in his condition ſhall find all things fall out contrary to his expectation, in all eſtates and conditions of life: and alſo ſhall ſeem to appear directly contrary to the promiſes of God.

Who

Who promiſeth, that no good thing ſhall be wanting to thoſe that fear him: and yet a man ſhall ſeem in likelyhood, to be in want of every good thing. That wealth and riches ſhall be in his houſe, and yet a man ſhall behold nothing but penury and want. This breedeth a wonderful temptation in the godly, ſo that a man is ready in this condition to fall into one of theſe evils; either to accuſe and condemn God of lying, or elſe to conclude, that he is not the perſon to whom the promiſes are made. What muſt be done then in this condition? Even to fall aſleep with the Bride, and to be contented that reaſon may be ſlain, and to lead a new life by faith in promiſes of God. This ſlaying of reaſon is the awakening of the heart, and then it doth begin to hear, and rightly to underſtand the words of Chriſt, according to the next words here following.

——*It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh; ſaying, Open to me my ſiſter, my love, my dove, my undefiled*——

This knocking is, when the Church is caſt into the uſe and exerciſe of faith. To knock is to make a noiſe, and it may be defined thus.

It is an noiſe in the Conſcience, ariſing from the ſenſe of ſin and apprehenſion of danger. It is when the very voice of the curſe is felt in the

the Conſcience: and the miſerable effects thereof are feared. This ſhe ſays is the voice of her beloved, becauſe the right opening of the Law, that maketh the ſtroke, and that the ſtroke of it may be felt, belongeth to the Goſpel.

And further, when her beloved knocketh, he ſaith open, ſo that as ſoon as the knock is heard, *the Bride is to open.* According to *Rev. 3. If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in and ſup with him, and he ſhall ſup with me.* I will take from him the hurt of all evils whatſoever, that ſhall be my ſupper; and I will beſtow all things upon him to make him comfortable and happy, that ſhall be his Supper. So that here is a twofold Supper, Chriſt ſuppeth, and the Bride ſuppeth. Chriſt hath his delight in taking away her calamities: the Bride hath her delight in receiving all bleſſings and comforts. And this comes to paſs by opening.

Now to open, is rightly to underſtand the meaning or end of the knock. Which in ſum is this. To inform the Bride, that all her wants ſhall be ſupplyed by the Goſpel; which cannot be ſupplyed by her own ways and works. Thus Chriſt after the manner of a Lover ſtands and knocks, waiting to enlighten the Church in this point. So that whether her wants be ſpiritual or temporal, for this life or the life to come, they ſhall all be ſupplyed (*when ſhe is loſt by the Law*) by ways and means unknown

if ſhe believeth. And this is the end of every knock. But for want of underſtanding the meaning of the knock, the noiſe is many times of long continuance. For many inſtead of ſtuddying how to believe, that they may attain all things by the Goſpel: do ſtrive to relieve themſelves by their own wiſdom and works, and in the end loſe their labour, and the Goſpel too.

Therefore, when we begin to hear a noiſe in the inward man, and to fall into great fear, either in regard of our ſins, and the everlaſting judgment of God, or by reaſon of ſome grievous temporal judgment which we apprehend to hang over our heads: let us be ſure then that Chriſt knocketh, not to put us in feare, (*for he affrighteth no man*) but to take away our fears from us, ſo that although it ſeem terrible to us upon the firſt apprehenſion of the knock; yet it is but the voice of our beloved, who ſtandeth and knocketh, not to execute the Law upon us, but to take all our evils upon himſelf that we may be made joyful and happy.

The hearing then of the noiſe muſt cauſe us to open the dore, that is to believe in Chriſt, and call upon his name, and to ſuffer him to come in and ſup with us; then ſhall we be freed from all our fears, and although we have forfeited all things by the Law, yet, we ſhall inherit all things by faith in the Goſpel.

Alſo

Also we must open, that the captivity of the Conscience may first be turned into liberty and freedom, before we seek for deliverance in respect of the outward man. (*according to Christ saying, seek first the Kingdom of Heaven and the righteousness thereof, and all things else shall be given unto you*) That so from that liberty and freedom which the Conscience possesseth through faith in Christ; the merciful care and providence of God might flow in upon us, and the nature of the whole Creation might be changed to us.

Now because in times of distress the Church is apt to be discouraged, Christ here useth words that shew relations between them: *as my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled.* Which in brief is this. *Thou art my sister, and I am thy loving brother, and companion in tribulation: and am affected with all thy afflictions. Thou art my love, my only joy and delight, therefore I cannot forsake thee: but do stand and knock to join my self unto thee, to take all evils and miseries from thee, and to settle thee in peace and joy. Thou art my dove, that forsakest not thy mate in a mournful condition. And because thou runnest not from me, but yeeldest thy self unto me, therefore thou art mine, therefore thou art undefiled: thy sins are washed away, and thou art clean. I came down from Heaven on purpose to Cloath my self with thy flesh; that I might free thy Conscience from all distress, and fill it with peace and joy.*

Open

Open therefore unto me, and receive that by the new and living way, which according to the Law and works thou haſt utterly loſt. Theſe are the words of faith which we muſt have recourſe unto in times of diſtreſs: being comfortable to us, and uſeful for us.

——*For my head is fill'd with dew, and my locks with the drops of the Night.*

In theſe words Chriſt ſheweth the reaſon, why the Church ſhall receive all things by inheritance, it is, becauſe his head *is fill'd with dew, and his locks with the drops of the Night.*

By the head of Chriſt is meant his Divinity, the head of Chriſt is God. And by *his locks* underſtand his humanity. And by *the drops of the night* his ſufferings in the fleſh. And by *the dew that his head is fill'd* with the fulneſs of merit in the Godhead, which made all the actions done in the manhood Meritorius: and alſo the pouring out of the benefit thereof by pure and Heavenly Doctrine, which is comfortable to poor ſinners; which Doctrine droppeth as *the dew.* 1 Cor. 11.

So that the obedience of God and man in one perſon, poured out in the Preaching of the Goſpel, and received by faith: *is the ground and foundation of all our comfort and joy.* Deut. 32.

For Christ by his obedience hath taken away
Col. 2. 14. the ground of all discomforts, *and nailed it to his Cross:* which being made known by the Gospel, and received by faith, setleth us in true peace and comfort. This must teach us, that when we are most of all oppressed with *the drops of the night*, with the feeling of our sins, or the fear of any cross or calamity; to fly to the humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath suffered for us. And stedfastly to believe, that seeing the locks of our beloved, were filled with the droppings of our present condition, that he is not only sensible of our present misery, but also knoweth how to succour us and help us.

And hath also taken away the curse, from every condition of misery, that possibly we may meet with in this miserable World, if we believe. Therefore when we feel the curse of the Law, and the guilt of our sins, and the fearful effects of Gods wrath, in any kind whatsoever, begin to fasten within us: then must we learn by faith to behold them all, to be nailed fast to the cross of Christ, from whence they can never return, if we stedfastly believe.

Verse III.

I have put off my Coat, how ſhall I put it on?——

THe Church underſtanding the benefits that come to her by the Goſpel, and the order in receiving of it, ſays, *I have put off my Coat:* by which ſhe meaneth the righteouſneſs of the Law in point of juſtification. This is the firſt thing taught in the Goſpel, how to *put off our old Coat.* And the firſt thing that Chriſt came to do, was to put on our Coat upon himſelf: whereby he became laden with our ſins, and alſo with our infirmities. The coat being thus put on by Chriſt: therefore the Church learneth to put him off by faith. So that this place doth not ſhew any ſluggiſhneſs in the Church, as if ſhe were in a bed of ſecurity with her coat off, and as though ſhe were loath to riſe and go about the works of the Law, but leadeth us into an higher matter, how to attain to be righteous before God. This wiſdom muſt we alſo learn, which we can never do, unleſs we remove the cauſe for which we keep our coat on, which is our falſe opinion of the Law. Some when they treat of the Law and works, do preſs it with that earneſtneſs, that they extol the righteouſneſs *Joh.* 931.

thereof, far beyond the righteousnes of faith: as if the principal cause of Christs coming into the world, were to make us holy by the Law. These with the *Pharisee* do button on the coat. Others, will have Christian righteousnes to begin in us, and perfected by Christ: which is but to put a piece of new cloth in an old garment, and make the rent worse. Learn we then to put off our coat wholly. But next the Church questioneth here, how shall I put it on? That is in life and conversation. For the greatest and most necessary question of all others in matters of Divinity, is rightly to understand these two things. How to lay aside the Law totally, in teaching the point of justification: and how to teach the use and practise of the Law rightly, in the life and conversation. How to handle these two points aright, that the Gospel may not destroy the use and practice of the Law: nor the Law the use and practice of the Gospel, is a point of great skill.

1 *Tim.* 1. 9.

Therefore the Church maketh question (*as if she were something ignorant in this point*) how shall I put it on? How shall I teach this point aright? If the works of the Law ought not to be required, but totally to be layed aside, in teaching the way to justification: according as it is written, the Law is not made for a righteous man, upon what ground then are they to be pressed at all?

All

All men have cauſe to complain of their ignorance in this point: therefore it muſt be our deſire to learn this heavenly skill. Now to cloath our ſelves with the Law that the uſe and practice of it may not be loſt: and how to be unclothed of the Law, that the Goſpel may not be loſt. This is a point of great cunning, and ought to be well ſtudied of every Chriſtian, chiefly, becauſe the ſtrongeſt hold of *Satans* Kingdom conſiſteth in the confounding of theſe two points one with another. Therefore it is further added here.

——I have waſhed my feet how ſhall I defile them?

Where by feet ſhe meaneth the inward man, and by waſhing, the cleanſing of the Soul through faith in Chriſt: according to Chriſts ſaying, he that is waſhed needeth not ſave to waſh his feet; but is clean every whit. But then it is added how ſhall I defile them? She had waſhed her feet by putting of her coat, whereby ſhe was cleanſed from ſin, therefore ſhe asketh the queſtion, how ſhall I defile them? As much as to ſay, how ſhall I preſs the works of the Law, ſo, as not to defile my feet again? If I ſhould urge a neceſſity of the Law, then I ſhould defile my feet, or if I ſhould totally caſt it off, becauſe I am juſtified without the Law: then I ſhould alſo defile my feet again, *Joh.* 13

for then it would come to pass, that in living without the use and practice of the Law, my Conscience would have no more the feeling and apprehension of sin, nor any sensible need of a Saviour: So that in casting away of all fear and care of the Law, I should at last contemn and cast away the Gospel also. And the consequence of all would be this, I should forsake my beloved, lose my peace and comfort here, and also everlasting life hereafter.

This sheweth us the practice of the Bride in all ages of the Church, which is first to lay aside the Law, next, to live in the use and practice of the Law. In receiving the Doctrine of justification, she heareth no Law: but in the life and conversation, she abideth in the use and practice of the Law.

All men ought to be well learn'd in this point, chiefly those that are Teachers of others, that are to enlighten the world; that they may so Preach the Gospel, that the Churches feet may be washed, and so teach the Law, that no mans feet may be defil'd again. If thou urgest a necessity of the Law, thou Preachest not the Gospel, but defilest thy mind and Conscience: Forasmuch as the Gospel first of all destroyeth that opinion. Or if thou totally lay aside the Law as useless to a believer, thou also defilest thy feet: because by that Doctrine thou drivest the sense and feeling of sin out of the world: and also all sensible need of a Saviour. Every man

man hath ſomething yet to learn in this point, the very beſt of all are too ſhort in it. How to perform this duty aright, is a queſtion made by the Church in all ages as in this place we ſee.

Therefore all muſt be learners. And all conſiſteth in two points, how to be righteous before God: and how to be righteous before men. Which that it may be learned, and the way known how to attain it, it is further added.

VERSE IV.

My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him.

MY beloved taught me how to diſtinguiſh betwixt faith and the Law, in Teaching the point of juſtification; and alſo how to join them together in Scripture and Doctrine. This is a rare and wonderful miſtery, which none can teach but Chriſt alone. In the Preaching of this point all men are at a loſs, until they are Divinely inſpir'd by the Holy Ghoſt. As for example, St. *Paul* telleth us in one Text, *that a man is juſtified by faith without the works of the Law.* Rom. 3. 28.

And in another Text, *that the doers of the Law shall be justified before God.* In both which Scriptures justification is attributed both to faith and also to the Law.

Rom.2.13.

Quæst. I question then, how faith and the Law shall be separated in this point, seeing justification is attributed to both?

Ans. Some will answer, that by doing is meant sincerity, which God accepts of all though there be some wants. This is true after justification: but this maketh no distinction between faith and the Law in the former point; but joineth them both together in the Act of justification. Therefore sincerity being a term pertaining to the Law, and prefer'd so high as to justifie before God: it must be perfect every way according to the Law, *which perfection no man ever had but Christ alone.*

Others say, that God gives a power with his Commands to enable those that are his to perform the Law, so that he accepts of them in Christ, which is no more then this. That by Christs merits we have an infusion of grace whereby we deserve our justification, which comes to no more then the former.

Now if no separation be made between faith and the Law, in the matter of justification, they cannot be joined together in Doctrine without repugnancy: Forasmuch as no man can be justified by the Law, wherein he is wanting in many things, when it pronounceth the curse upon all those that continue not therein in

in all things. Neither can any mans works be accounted good before men: when they are drawn up into the judgment ſeat, and not directed towards men.

Therefore I ſay as before, that this Cardinal point, is ſo high and ſecret a myſtery, that none of the Scribes nor diſputers of the World can poſſibly reach unto, by any art or humane skill. So that unleſs the door be opened, the myſtery is hid, and all men remain in darkneſs: but the door being opened all things in the houſe are viſible and manifeſt. Therefore the Church ſaith here, *my beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door:* that is, to open all thoſe Scriptures, that ſeem to claſh againſt the Doctrine of faith, and to hinder mans righteouſneſs before God, and alſo which being not underſtood, do ſpoil him of his righteouſneſs before men.

Now our beloved openeth, when we begin to underſtand what true obedience to the Law is, Namely, to believe and confeſs that we do it not.

According to Saint *Paul*, there is none that underſtandeth, *there is none righteous:* there is none that feareth God, but altogether are become unprofitable, and abominable. This to believe and confeſs, is the firſt point in true obedience to the Law. Another is, when we ſubmit to the curſe which the Law pronounceth againſt us, and confeſs the ſentence of it to be moſt juſt. The laſt is, wholly to renounce the

Rom. 3. 10.

Which is not to be underſtood of an outſide confeſſion but ſuch as ariſeth from the ſight of ſin and hope of mercy.

the Law, *and to seek after the righteousnes of God, manifested without the Law:* according as
Rom. 3. 21. is required in the first Commandment, as is to be seen more largely in Song third, and Verse ten.

And let us also note this, that as soon as we feel and confess our death and condemnation by the Law, then are we become dead to the Law, and the Law is become dead unto us. So that even as death dissolves the compound, and makes a separation between the Soul and Body: So doth this death also, untie the compound, and make a separation between the Conscience and the Law. And the reason is, because in renouncing the Law, and flying to Christ for righteousnes, the bargain or Covenant that was made with man at first, touching righteousnes by the Law, is dissolved, or untied. This obedience it seemeth good to me, to call the Passive obedience, which is clean contrary to the Active, for in this obedience thou workest nothing but suffrest thy self to be driven from the carnal bed, to Christ by faith.

Rom. 2. 13. In this sense *the doers of the Law are justified before God.* And in the sense they that do his Commandments have right to the *tree of life.*
Rev. 22. And in this sense, understand all the promises of God that are made to mans obedience. This Doctrine separateth faith and the Law, in the matter of justification, and yet joineth them together in Scripture and Doctrine. For it

sheweth,

ſheweth, that doing the Law to be juſtified, is to be underſtood of faithful and ſpiritual doing, and not of the active or moral doing. And alſo, as it ſetteth before us nothing but Gods free grace in juſtifying of us: So it breedeth in us that love to God and man which is required in the firſt and ſecond Table, which ſetteth us on to active obedience. For as a falſe opinion of the Law within us, ſpoileth us of our righteouſneſs before God and men: So alſo, doth the deſtroying of that opinion within us by the Goſpel, work in us a true and right obedience towards God and men. The ſum of all is this; that to believe and confeſs our own unrighteouſneſs, is the firſt point in Evangelical obedience.

With this confeſſion the righteouſneſs of faith begins: and to this confeſſion the righteouſneſs of Chriſt belongs. Which every man muſt learn to believe, and this is the true doing of the Law in faith, by which means we receive the grace and favour of God in Chriſt, and power to do good works before men.

Therefore the Bride ſaith here, my bowels were moved for him. After my beloved had once opened the door, and diſcovered unto me this heavenly myſtery: my bowels were moved, I was altogether made new, I was changed, and transformed, into another manner of Creature, my bowels were moved with love and thankfulneſs to God for his Infinit mercy to me: and alſo fill'd with love, mercy, and com-

compaſſion towards others, which is the ſum and ſubſtance of both Tables.

This hole of the dore muſt therefore be rightly known, otherwiſe the obedience of faith can never be taught, but all people ſhall remain in darkneſs: but the hole being found, and the dore opened, Antichriſt is revealed, and the Kingdom of Heaven is opened. The Conſcience is eaſed, and God is pleaſed. Then ſhalt thou eaſily reconcile all Scriptures, *(by the ſame rule)* that ſeem to be at variance in this point, and walking in the practice thereof, thou ſhalt find ſuch a light opened in thy mind: that thou thy ſelf ſhalt ſay, thou never kneweſt before.

Verse V.

I roſe up to open to my beloved: and my hands dropped with Myrrhe, and my fingers with ſweet ſmelling Myrrhe, upon the handles of the lock.

IN the former Verſe the Church ſheweth, that the Bride-groom openeth the dore, that the true Goſpel may be underſtood, which is done by the Miniſtry of the Goſpel.

In this Verſe the behaviour of the Church is ſet down in her receiving of the ſame. She roſe

rose up to open to her beloved. As soon as her beloved put in his hand by the hole of the dore, to open and unlock the mystery of the Kingdom of Heaven, she set her self with all attentiveness and dilligence to hear and receive the same. She did not fight against the Doctrine of her beloved, nor judge it before she heard it: but rose up to open and receive the same.

And then she declareth the effects that followed, my hands she saith, dropped with *Myrrhe*, and my fingers with sweet smelling *Myrrhe*, which meaneth, into the hearts and Consciences of others.

It is not much material to observe the distinction here betwixt the hands, and the fingers.

A thing is said to be handled, or taken in hand, according to Saint *Luke*, when an orderly Declaration is made to others, of those things that are firmly believed, by those that make report of the same. *Luk.* 1.

And it may also be said to be touched (*as it were with fingers*) when it is more briefly and compendiously drawn up into a short sum or sentence of words. Now both these do drop the *Myrrhe*, not only when the Doctrine is throughly and perfectly handled, but also when it is more briefly touched: for so the Bride saith here, *my fingers dropped with sweet smelling Myrrhe, and it was upon the handles of the Lock.*

A Lock is that which faſtneth the dore, that nothing within the Houſe can be ſeen, unleſs the dore be unlock'd. Therefore by the Lock we muſt underſtand that bar or hinderance, that hindereth the Goſpel from entring into the Soul: which Lock or bar is only unbelief, which ſin alone ſtandeth in direct oppoſition to the Goſpel. And the buſineſs of the Church is to open the grounds and reaſons of the ſame. And when ſhe was diſcovering the myſtery of iniquity, by opening the grounds of unbelief, and laying the foundation of faith, ſhe ſaith, *her hands dropped with Myrrhe, and her fingers with ſweet ſmelling Myrrhe.* That is, ſhe dropped true holineſs and righteouſneſs into the Souls of thoſe that heard it.

Exod. 30.

For the annointing oyl which was made for the Prieſts, and alſo for the Tabernacle and his veſſels, which was compounded with *Myrrhe* was holy, whoſoever was annointed with it was holy, and whoſoever touched it was holy. Therefore whereſoever this *Myrrhe* is dropped, it maketh the perſon holy. And for this reaſon, ſhe calleth her Doctrine, *the ſweet ſmelling Myrrhe*, becauſe it maketh thoſe where it is dropped, ſweet in the ſight of God; ſweet in the ſight of Conſcience, and alſo a ſweet Savour in every place.

By this the practice of the Church may be ſeen in all ages. Which is firſt to open and receive the annointing oyl from above; next,

to

to touch upon thoſe points which drop the *Myrrhe* into the Conſciences of others.

Now the *Myrrhe* cannot drop, unleſs the Lock be opened, for it droppeth in handling of the Lock. Neither can the Lock be opened without the Key which turneth and openeth the Lock. Now Chriſt not *Moſes*, hath the *Key of the houſe of David*, by which the myſtery of the Kingdom of Heaven is unlocked. For the Law ſaith, *do it and thou ſhalt live:* and ſo it maketh works to be the ground of faith, but the Goſpel ſaith, believe and thou ſhalt live. Believe what? Even this very thing that thou doeſt it not. That thou loveſt not God, feareſt not God, neither delighteſt, nor truſteſt in him as thou oughteſt to do: nor yet loveſt thy Neighbour in any meaſure as thou ſhouldeſt. (*And this all men will confeſs in word, but their faith is grounded upon another bottom. Therefore all men without the knowledg of the Goſpel are unbelievers.*) When thou canſt once begin to reſt upon the Goſpel, not becauſe of thy works or duties done, but becauſe thou underſtandeſt and believeſt, that the righteouſneſs of Chriſt is given to every poor humbled ſinner that trembleth before him, and asketh the forgiveneſs of his ſins: then haſt thou the right uſe of *Davids* Key, then ſhalt thou joyfully perform good works unto thy neighbour, which works although they are not perfect, yet they are accepted, becauſe the nature of thy faith is changed,

Eſa. 22. 22.

Faith driveth us to that righteouſneſs that is required by the firſt Commandment. See *Song* 3d. *Verſe* 10.

changed, touching thy juſtification, and remiſſion of ſins.

When thou underſtandeſt the nature of this Key well, then ſhalt thou eaſily perceive how to *drop the Myrrhe into the hearts of others.* According to the ſaying of the Bride in this place, *my hands dropped with Myrrhe, and my fingers with ſweet ſmelling Myrrhe upon the handles of the Lock.*

Verse VI.

I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had with-drawn himſelf and was gone——

IN the former Verſe it is ſhewn how the Church opened and received the Doctrine of her beloved, and taught it unto others: now here we find the caſe and condition ſhe was caſt into, after ſhe was well armed and furniſhed with the Goſpel. She was caſt into ſuch a condition that no appearance of her beloved could be perceived. This (*as I conceive*) may very well be underſtood, in reſpect of his care and providence concerning outward things, a condition which many that are godly are often caſt into: In this reſpect ſhe

ſaith, *my beloved had with drawn himſelf, and was gone.* This condition ſhe fell into for the exerciſe and tryal of her faith: after ſhe had opened to her beloved, and well underſtood the Goſpel. And this complaint ſhe made in *Song third.*

Where ſhe complaineth of the very ſame condition. Which ſheweth, that ſuch ſort of tryals do often befal the godly in this miſerable and wretched World; when our beloved Chriſt will ſeem to hide himſelf, and to caſt off all care and regard of us when we are in miſery, that we ſhall have no ſenſe or feeling at all of his love: but will ſeem to be as a ſtranger that hath no relation to us, even as one that hath forgotten all his promiſes. And therefore ſhe complaineth further in the next words.

——*My Soul failed when he ſpake, I called upon him, and he gave me no anſwer.*

When he ſpake to me in his promiſes, that no good thing ſhould be wanting, but that all my wants ſhould be ſupplyed, and bid me caſt my care upon him, becauſe he cared for me, *my Soul did even fail, and my confidence was even ſhaken and gone,* becauſe I ſaw that all things were promiſed, but nothing ſeem'd to be perform'd.

And further ſhe ſaith, *I call'd upon him and*

he gave me no answer. I prayed, and humbled my self much before him, and cryed aloud unto him in my sad condition; *and yet he gave me no answer.* By all which we see, that it is no new way of excercising the faith of the Church, when the godly are cast into poverty, reproach and contempt of the world, and when they see no way nor means appearing which way to get out. In this condition therefore, must we be content to live in, and not to despaire of help, whensoever it shall please our beloved, to exercise us in it. This great and sore affliction fell upon the Bride, after she had done her duty faithfully and carefully, for she had opened to her beloved, and her hands had dropped the *Myrrhe:* therefore it was for the tryal of her faith, that she might learn by being exercised, not to faint in a sad condition, but to believe in the promises of God, although nothing appeared to reason, why she should believe the same. According as it is said of *Abraham*, that he believed in God, who calleth things that are not, as though they were. Therefore I say, this being mark'd out to be the condition of the Church many times, no man must take offence at his beloved if he please to exercise his faith this way: but quietly and patiently to depend upon him, and call upon his name. But mark we further what she complaineth of in this condition.

Verse

VERSE VII.

The watchmen that went about the City found me, they ſmote me, they wounded me ——

WE are not to underſtand by the watchmen the Miniſters of the Goſpel, but ſuch as continually watch to ſee the people of God in miſery; and to add affliction to the afflicted. As is opened more at large in Song third.

Of theſe the Prophets *David* and *Jeremy* do often complain. The Church ſays of theſe, they ſmote her; that is, behind her back, with words of reproach: and wounded her, in her name, credit and reputation.

And this bitter temptation the godly ſhall be caſt into by reaſon of the watchmen, oftentimes: of which ſort of people, let all that love God, and their own peace and comfort, learn in time to beware.

——*The keepers of the walls, took my vail from me.*

We are not to understand by the vail in this
Cor. 2. 3. place, that which *Paul* speaketh of, which is spread over the heart in the reading of *Moses.* Nor yet such a vail as was wont to be worn by
Isa. 2. the Daughters of *Zion* for ornament: she being here in the habit of a mourner. But the vail here spoken of, *(or rather the image of a vail)* is that reproach and infamy, which was cast upon her by the watchmen: whereby they thought to spoil her of her Title, the Bride; and to set her, *(as much as in them lay)* in the shape and attire of an Harlot.

For even as it was the manner of Harlots to cover their faces with a vail, *(as is to be seen*
Gen. 38. 16. *in Tamar)* that they might never afterwards be known or appear to be Harlots: So it was the manner of the watchmen, so to cover the Church with infamy and reproach, that *(as much as in them lay)* she should never afterwards appear to be the Bride. And this she calleth her vail. *And this the keepers of the walls took from her.*

Isa. 62. By the keepers, understand the watchmen of the walls, that do continually watch for the preservation of the spiritual City. That do always help to preserve the Church in her faith and confidence lest she should be dismayed by the

the afflictions of the watchmen, theſe do endeavour to build up the walls of *Jeruſalem:* and to pray day and night until ſhe be made a praiſe in the Earth. Theſe keepers took off the vail of reproach, that by reaſon of the watchmen was caſt over the Bride. They mentioned her condition at the Throne of grace, comforted her in all her tribulations, and endeavoured ſo to ſtill the noiſe, and ſmitings of the watchmen, that at length all her reproach and infamy vaniſhed and came to nothing. *Pſal.* 59. 6

This being the lot of the Church, every one that is godly muſt expect, that at ſome time or other in his life he ſhall be covered with this vail, although he carry himſelf ever ſo exact and uprightly. The watchmen are in every corner; they go round about the City, (*as David ſpeaks*) and make a noiſe like a Dog: which barketh ſometimes at a very ſhadow, ſometimes becauſe other Dogs bark, but be it for what cauſe it will, the leaſt blemiſh that may be in the Bride, ſets them all a barking. Therefore as we muſt expect the vail: So we muſt beware of giving occaſion.

Moreover, as we muſt look to be in the condition of the Church, ſo we muſt imitate the practice of the keepers, that ſo when the afflictions of the Bride do become the muſick of the wicked, and when ſhe is covered with great reproach: when the Sons of *Zion* are eſteemed but as earthen pitchers, then we muſt begin to ſet to our Shoulder, and take of the

vail. First, by our prayers, next, by our endeavour to remove all the reproaches that are caſt upon her: and Laſtly, by comforts and conſolations. Then ſhall the breaches of the wall be repaired: and the ſpiritual City preſerved, from thoſe that deſire her ruin.

Verse VIII.

I charge you, O Daughters of Jeruſalem, *if ye finde my beloved; that ye tell him, that I am ſick of love.*

The Churches vail being taken of by the keepers, ſhe is *ſick of love*. She finding ſo wonderful a deliverance out of ſo bitter a Temptation, is even ſick with joy and thankfulneſs to God. And thus it is with us, when God turneth our Captivity, by his own mighty hand and grace alone, and letteth us ſee, that he caſteth us down into reproach and contempt, for no other end and purpoſe, but to exalt us again by ways unknown, and to magnify his grace and mercy in us: who can chuſe in this condition but be *ſick of love?* And to have his heart enlarged with praiſe and thankfulneſs to his holy name?

Now

Now ſhe chargeth the Daughters if they find her beloved to tell him of her ſickneſs. If they find the true Chriſt in the Miniſtry, and alſo in the way of his providence, as ſhe hath done: that they alſo become thankful to him, and praiſe his name, which is her own condition.

Now although the charge here be, if they find him, yet this doth not make it a matter of indifference, whether they find him or not, but implies, that they ought to ſeek him ſo as to find him.

The Daughters were (no doubt) Miniſters, that bare a great ſway in the viſible Church, for they diſpute much with the bride, and they are often charged by the Bridegroom not to diſturbe her: yet they were ſuch as had not the knowledg of the true Chriſt, as appears alſo by the next Verſe.

Now in that they are charged ſo to ſeek, as to find the true Chriſt it ſheweth. That there ought to be a principal care in the Miniſters of the Goſpel, to ſee that the true Chriſt be Preached. For otherwiſe all men muſt of neceſſity be everlaſtingly loſt. And how ſhall God be glorified in his mercy, or men receive any comfort by Chriſt merits, if Chriſt be never known? Beſides if this point be not continually beat upon, no man can poſſibly ever underſtand it, being ſo contrary to mans natural opinion of God.

Which ſheweth us one reaſon, why there is ſo little knowledg of the true Chriſt in the World, it is becauſe there is ſo little care taken in this, that the true Chriſt be Preached. Therefore many ſeek after Chriſt, but few find him: becauſe they ſeek him not aright. With theſe it comes to paſs, even as Chriſt ſaid to
Joh.8.21. the *Jews*, *ye ſhall ſeek me and not find me: and ſhall die in your ſins.* And why? *Becauſe they ſought him not by faith, but in the works of the*
Rev.9.32. *Law.* They that ſeek him in the Law can never find him: becauſe the true Chriſt is not revealed in the Law. Neither can any man define by the Law what true faith in Chriſt is.

The Daughters of *Jeruſalem*, cry out all upon this, thou muſt do the Law, which all men will grant ought to be done: but to what end and purpoſe works are Commanded, or which way the Law doth further us to faith in Chriſt, this they can ſay nothing to. This I conceive to be the ſcope of this place, which I only touch: they that have a mind may inlarge it as they pleaſe.

Now the Daughters queſtion in the next Verſe, what the beloved is, which makes it apparent they had not the knowledg of the true Chriſt.

Verse IX.

What is thy beloved more then another beloved, O thou faireſt among women? what is thy beloved more then another beloved, that thou doſt ſo charge us?

IT is as much as to ſay, what is the righteouſneſs of faith more then the righteouſneſs of the Law, or wherein lieth the difference? Such is the abominable ignorance of all men, till God open the eyes of the mind: they ſee no difference between Chriſt and *Moſes*. And in this point the Language of the whole earth is confounded: as it was at the building of *Babel*. Thou makeſt a great doe ſay the Daughters, *about thy beloved*, and when all comes to all, *thy beloved is no more then another beloved*. For thou art juſtified by faith we grant, but thy faith muſt be a working faith; otherwiſe thy faith is dead, and not a living faith. Wherein then lies the difference, or *what is thy beloved more then another beloved?* So that in a word the Daughters attribute juſtification to faith, but when they go to define what juſtifying faith is: they can define it no otherwiſe, but to be a working faith. From whence it muſt follow, that he hath will find *the beloved*, muſt find him firſt in his own righteouſneſs or works, which

which must be the form or essence of his faith.

Also it is to be noted here, that when they call the Church *the faireſt among women*, they give unto her the same Title that Christ doth, but they deny that she hath that righteousnes which is essential to that Title; which is faith alone. For as was said before, they understand no other faith but a working faith.

Therefore how to define that faith which is alone, and to distinguish it from a working faith they know not. And how can the Bride *be the faireſt amongſt women*, when she wanteth that faith, which uniteth her to Christ; without whose righteousnes *she cannot be fair?* For say they, *what is thy beloved more then another beloved?* What doth thy faith avail thee if it hath not works? Can faith save thee? Is it not of far les worth then that which bringeth forth works? So that although in words they call the Church the faireſt: yet in heart and opinion they own and acknowledg no other righteousnes whereby she is purified from her sin: but the righteousnes of the Law, and her own works.

Such confusion the want of understanding in this point breedeth, where faith as it is alone and justifieth: is not distinguished, from faith joined to works, which Sanctifieth. And this most horrible confusion is in the Church amongst many great Doctors at this day, where this point is not rightly understood. For we are

justified

juſtified by faith ſay they, without the works of the Law, but as ſoon as they come to treat of the Law, they will affirm moſt ſtrongly, that without the works of the Law, a man can have no evidence at all of his faith. As if a man were juſtified by faith in the ſight of God; but by works in his Conſcience. Theſe with the Daughters call the bride *the faireſt amongſt women by faith*, but when they come to define what that faith is, they mean no other thing then what is bred and nouriſhed in the bride, by her own works.

So that in a word *ſhe is the faireſt*: but by their Doctrine, ſhe is the filthieſt of all Creatures, deſpiſed and condemned of God. Theſe run into a moſt deadly evil through a falſe definition of faith, for many times the evidence of works is loſt: how then ſhall I be aſſured of my faith? And ſo of Chriſt, and alſo of Everlaſting life? Or elſe muſt I deſpair, and die in unbelief? Such confuſion deſtroyeth the very nature of faith, for faith hath an evidence in it ſelf, and the nature of it is to aſſure, *Heb.* 11. 1. from the light and teſtimony it receiveth from the word of God: it ſpeaketh perſwaſion, as well as it worketh ſanctification, to believe, is not only an act, but ſenſe of faith; So that he that believes, knows that he believes. And it is impoſſible for a man to believe any thing firmly, but he muſt know that he doth believe it: for faith is to receive, and to receive is by an

an act of the will, and no man can receive a thing willingly, but he muſt needs know that he doth receive it.

Now in that the ſpeech is here doubled by the Daughters, it ſheweth that they were very proud and ſtiff in their opinion. *What is thy beloved*, ſay they, *more then another beloved*, that thou doſt ſo charge us? What are we blind? Here although the confuſion be ſo great, that it ſeparateth all men from Chriſt; yet they muſt not be charged with it, nor be thought to err in the leaſt tittle.

Such a moſt peſtilent Heritick is mans opinion, which will not be contented unleſs it live in the greateſt Hereſy, which ſeparateth all men from Chriſt; and yet it muſt go for the greateſt vertue.

Now in the next Verſe, and ſo to the end of this Chapter, in anſwer to the Daughters; the Church ſetteth down the Excellency *of her beloved, beyond any other beloved.*

Verse

VERSE X.

My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefeſt among ten thouſand.

IN which words we muſt note, that ſhe looketh not upon Chriſt by way of reflection, as the Daughters do, but directly by faith. Therefore that Chriſtian righteouſneſs may be truly known, ſhe ſpeaketh of ſuch excellencies as are proper only to his own perſon. And firſt ſhe ſays, *my beloved is white*, by which ſhe meaneth his righteouſneſs imputed, which being of Infinite purity, was fit for a Redemption. And alſo ruddy, becauſe the guilt and punniſhment of mans ſin was laid upon him. *Rev.* 19.8.

Now by this deſcription *of her beloved*, ſhe totally overthrows the Religion of the Daughters, and learneth rightly to teach the Law. For if the white garments of her beloved muſt cloath her from the wrath of God: then the Law which ſaith, *do this and live*, muſt have a new ſignification, which the Daughters underſtand not. Alſo, *if her beloved be ruddy, or red*, being crucified for her ſin, as ſhe confeſſeth: then is ſhe alſo white, being clothed with his righteouſneſs. *Eſa.* 63.1, 2.

According

According to Saint *Paul*, *he was made ſin for*
Cor. 5.21. *us, who knew no ſin: that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him.* But on the contrary, the Daughters by reſting in an opinion of works, by a falſe underſtanding of the Law, do uncloath Chriſt of his ruddineſs, and draw the guilt of ſin upon themſelves, and are bound to make an Everlaſting ſatisfaction to the Juſtice of God. Therefore the Bride ſays here, *my beloved, is more then another beloved.*

And thus it is with us alſo, if we ſo underſtand the Law, as to make it the condition of the promiſes, then do we uncloath Chriſt of his ruddineſs: and by that Principle in us ſuffer only whiteneſs to remain in his own perſon, which perſon of Chriſt, being ſtripped of our guilt; his whiteneſs remains on himſelf, and to us can never be imputed. But if we ſo underſtand and teach the Law, that it may be ſuitable, or ſubordinate to the Goſpel; then all our redneſs or guiltineſs, ſhall be laid upon Chriſt our beloved, and his righteouſneſs ſhall be imputed unto us. To teach this point rightly, and alſo to practice it in time of diſtreſs and miſery, is ſo exceeding pleaſant, that no heart can chuſe, (*that rightly underſtands it*) but burſt out into joy and ſinging.

Now ſhe further ſaith, that he is the chiefeſt among ten thouſand. Meaning the chiefeſt Prophet or Teacher, and alſo the chiefeſt ſtandard Bearer, alluding to the heads of the tribes who

who were ſtandard Bearers when they were numbred to go out to War. In which War of the Children of *Iſarel* againſt the *Canaanites*, and alſo when they were to go out againſt the *Benjamites*, *Judah* muſt go firſt; he muſt be the chief ſtandard Bearer. *Reuben* (*according to the Order of the Genealogy*) was to be firſt, in reſpect he was the eldeſt Son of *Iſarel*, yet becauſe our Lord ſprang out of *Judah*, and becauſe the War againſt the *Canaanites* was a type of a greater matter, therefore *Judah* muſt go firſt. To ſhew us this, that Chriſt himſelf muſt tread the Wine-preſs of the wrath of God. *Num.* 2.

Now ſeeing Chriſt hath trodden the Wine-preſs alone, hath baniſhed the curſe, and overcome death: therefore muſt he ſtand in the Conſcience alone without the Law or works. And even as *Judah* was the firſt and chiefeſt in the War againſt the enemies of *Iſrael*; and not *Reuben*, although he was the eldeſt Son: even ſo muſt Chriſt (*and not works*) be look'd upon firſt, in receiving comfort into the afflicted Conſcience. And thus the Bride confuteth the Daughters. My beloved ſhe ſaith, is more then thy beloved, my beloved ſtanding alone in my Conſcience, ſeparateth me from the Law, and the guilt of ſin: But thy beloved ſtanding not alone in thy Conſcience but leaveth thee under the Law, and in thy ſin.

His

Verse XI.

His head is as the most fine Gold, his locks are bushy, and black as a Raven.

1 Cor. 11. 3. BY the head of Christ is meant his Divinity, by which he went through his Kingly Office, and got the victory over the Law, sin, death, and *Satan*. Which is compar'd *to fine Gold*, not that the Godhead is like unto Gold, but to shew that his Kingdom which is purchased by the merits of his Divinity is like unto Gold: in that it is durable being an Everlasting Kingdom, and the Churches cloathing is said to be of wrought Gold. So that in regard of the golden effects that come to us by the deity: *his head is said to be as the fine Gold.*

Acts 17. 29.

Luke 1. 33.

Psal. 45. 13.

Quest. But what is meant by the blackness and bushiness of *his Locks?*

Ans. If you look into *Dan.* 1. 9. & *Rev.* 1. 14. *his hair is said to be white as the pure wooll*, but here, *to be bushy and black as a raven.* Understand then, that the whiteness of his hairs in *Daniel*, sheweth him to be the Ancient of days, therefore it signifieth his Divinity: and that the bushiness, and blackness of his locks here, sheweth him to be youthly and strong, therefore it signifieth his Humanity. By this description

deſcription alſo the bride overcometh the Daughters, and ſheweth her beloved, to be more then another beloved: for the righteouſneſs of my beloved, is the righteouſneſs of God and man in one perſon, and therefore accepted for me of the Father: but the righteouſneſs of thy beloved, is but the righteouſneſs of thine own ſinful perſon, whereby thou art accurſed and condemned.

VERSE XII.

His eyes are as the eyes of Doves, by the Rivers of waters, waſhed with Milk, and fitly ſet.

BY his eyes are meant his underſtanding whereby he knoweth how to pitty us and help us, having (*now in Heaven*) a fellow feeling of our extremities. For although he knew not ſin by the Acts of ſin, yet he knew ſin by the effects of ſin, and therefore in all our afflictions he is afflicted. And are like the Doves, which never forſake their mate. And which delight to be by the waters, which ſheweth, that Chriſt delighteth to help his people in their afflictions. And are fitly ſet, meaning the object that Chriſt faſtneth his eyes upon. Not he that is rich, full, and thinketh he hath *Pſal.* 33. 13, 18, 34. 15. *Eſa.* 63. 9.

need of nothing: Christ looketh not upon him, but he that feeleth his spiritual poverty and confesseth the same. In this respect also, the Bride thus praiseth *her beloved*; *my beloved* knoweth how to succour and deliver me in the day of distress, that am unworthy: but thy beloved succoureth not, nor yet looketh upon any but those that are worthy of the same.

Verse XIII.

His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers: his lips like Lillies, dropping sweet smelling Myrrhe.

Isa. 50. BY his cheeks are meant, his sufferings, of which it is said, *I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked of the hair.* And this he did when he owed us nothing.

Mat. 26. And therefore when they spit in his face, buffetted him and smote him with the palms of their hands, he gave himself most freely to suffer for us. The Law thus falling upon Christ, Christ by his Resurrection condemned the Law, and also hath deliver'd us from the condemning power of the Law.

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The true knowledg hereof in time of diſtreſs, is to us, *as a bed of ſpices*: wherein we may reſt our ſelves with ſweet repoſe. Which Heavenly ſpices, do ſmell as ſweet, to the wounded Conſcience; as the ſweeteſt flowers do to the ſenſe. The ſcent of which Heavenly poſey, will drive away all poiſon ſmells, and fumes out of the diſtreſſed mind, and alſo fill it with moſt fragrant ſweetneſs.

And when ſhe ſaith *his lips are like Lillies dropping ſweet ſmelling Myrrhe*, it meaneth, when the benefits of Chriſts death and Reſurrection, are dropped into the Soul by the Preaching of the Goſpel.

And this ſhe applyeth likewiſe againſt the daughters after this manner. My beloved hath joined himſelf to my condition and hath moſt freely ſuffered for me, by whoſe ſufferings I am acquitted: but thy beloved never gave himſelf for thee, to ſuffer for thee, but leaveth thee to be condemned.

Verse XIV.

His hands are as Gold Rings ſet with the beryl: his belly is as bright Ivory overlaid with ſaphires.

His hands and bowels are here commended, being always open and ready to ſhew compaſſion to us in all neceſſities. According
Pſal. 145. to the *Pſalmiſt*, *thou openeſt thine hand and ſatisfieſt the deſire of every living thing.*

Therefore in that we have help at every need, and many times by ways we never thought of: it is from the merciful hands of our beloved Bridegroom. Which is as welcome to us, as a jewel ſet in a Ring. And as bright and clear to be ſeen, as the ſhineing of a precious Stone, that nothing but only the good hand of God, hath been our help and ſuccour.

Therefore ſhe alſo ſaith, my beloved is more then thy beloved, for my beloveds hands and bowels are ready to ſuccour me, as ſoon as I feel and confeſs my ſin: but thy beloved ſheweth no mercy to thee, but calleth for uſtice againſt the offendour.

VERSE XV.

His legs are as pillars of Marble, ſet upon ſockets of fine Gold: his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the Cedars.

HIs legs are commended in regard of their ſtrength, likened to Marble, for ſtrength and duration: So that Chriſt by his legs muſt bear us and carry us, when we begin to halt, and grow lame, and feeble, in our obedience. They are *ſet upon ſockets of fine Gold*, which meaneth his Divinity, whereby he became able to eaſe us and help us. His Countenance is like the *Cedars*; which were excellent for ſmell and loftineſs, over topped and over ſhadowed all the trees of the Forreſt: So doth the countenance of our beloved over ſhadow the frownes of all our enemies.

This maketh the Bride alſo to ſing againſt the daughters, *my beloved is more then thy beloved, thy beloved leaveth thee under the frownes of Sin, and Satan, Death, and Hell*, but the loving countenance of my beloved delivereth me from them all. But there is one thing more ſhe chiefly commendeth him for.

Verse XVI.

His mouth is most sweet, he is altogether lovely.——

THese words are the last part of the description *of her beloved*, and the chiefest thing she praiseth him for. The question is wherein the sweetness of Christ's mouth lies? I answer, First of all in that he teacheth thee by the Gospel to believe, he sheweth thee the true ground of faith, So *Acts* 15. *That the Gentiles might hear the word of the Gospel and believe, Christ doth not infuse faith without the word, but by the word.* But how is this done thou wilt say? For answer, mark his own words in *John* 6. 45. *Every man that hath heard and learned of the Father cometh unto me,* no man then can believe in Christ, unless he learn the first principle of his faith from the Father. And what is that first principle of faith that must be learned of the Father? Look *Esai.* 9. 6. And thou shalt see, *unto us a Child is born, unto us a son is given,* the first principle in thy faith is the Fathers will in giving, for if the Son be given, there must be a giver which is the Father. Not but that the Son also giveth himself, but the Father is first in priority of Order, which order and method

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in giving, muſt be the rule and method of our faith. No man could believe if the father were not willing, the Son can do nothing of himſelf, but what he ſeeth the Father do, but whatſoever things the Father doth, the ſame alſo doth the Son; the Father therefore being willing to give his Son, the Son alſo is willing to give himſelf, the giving of which gift by the Father, is the firſt principle for thy faith to build upon, for how canſt thou conclude that Chriſt (*which cometh by gift*) is thine, unleſs thou firſt underſtand that he is given unto thee? For faith is grounded upon truth, and not upon falſhood; Firſt, then thou muſt hear and learn the truth concerning the Fathers will in giving thee his Son, as thou art a ſinner and dead before God, (*and not as a ſuppoſed righteous perſon*) if thou wilt learn to believe, for faith is defined to be a belief of the truth, and not to believe a lie, and Chriſt ſaith, *he that believeth in me, believeth not on me, but on him that ſent me*, becauſe Chriſt by his Doctrine directeth us firſt to hear the Fathers will that ſent him: with this gift of the Father faith is given us (*when the appointed time is come*) as the imediate effect of the Fathers gift. *Joh.* 5. 19. 2 *Theſ.* 2 13. *Joh* 12 44.

Now if thou quibleſt about the word *us*, (*it being ſaid unto us a Son is given*) and thinkeſt that thou thy ſelf art not intended in the gift, becauſe thou findeſt ſo many premiſes made to righteous perſons, when thou thy ſelf art a miſerable ſinner, then doſt thou totally baniſh

Christ out of thy Conscience, remaineſt in thy sins, and must suffer the loss of Eternal life and glory: and if thou teacheſt that point unto others, thou doſt not only discover thine unbelief, but also professeſt thy self to be an unbeliever, and doſt by thy Doctrine establish the world in the grounds of unbelief, directly contrary to the office of the holy Ghoſt, which is to convince the world of sin because they
Joh. 16. believe not. Thou seeſt then first, wherein the sweetneſs of Christs mouth lies, in that he teacheth thee to believe, first, by destroying the ground of unbelief, which nothing can do but only the Fathers gift, next, in shewing thee upon what ground thou must begin to build thy faith, not because he first loveth thy works, but thy sinful person, that thou mayeſt love him, bleſs him, confeſs thy sins unto him, and mourn for the depravation of thy sinful nature, not out of diſpaire, but of love and thankfulneſs to thy Heavenly Father who hath shewed mercy to thee and given thee his Son.

Secondly, His mouth is moſt sweet in that he teacheth thee the new signification of the terms of the Law, he that sate upon the throne
Rev. 21.5. said behold I make all things new; So that since the fall of man, the terms of the Law (*do this and live*) have a signification which is new, and therefore mans obedience is said to be new.

But

But what is it to make all things new? *Queſt.*

I anſwer, to make all things new, is to make a new way to attain to the righteouſneſs of the Law and Everlaſting life, by the righteouſneſs of faith alone. Underſtand it thus, the terms lay'd upon *Adam* were do this in thine own perſon and live, but do this ſince the fall is, do it in the perſon of thy Redeemer and live, ſo that do this, before and ſince the fall have a double ſignification, the one is old, the other is new, to receive grace from the Redeemer to do the Law in thine own perſon doth not make a new ſignification of the terms, nor thy obedience to be new, for that is doing in thine own perſon, (*the ſame terms which were lay'd upon Adam*) and not in the perſon of thy Redeemer, nor canſt thou ever believe that God loveth thee by that obedience, nor yet be brought to love God: but to do in the perſon of the Redeemer is to believe that he hath done it for thee, and given his obedience to thee, before he requireth any of thee, that ſo by a new and living way thou mighteſt learn to love him, fear him, and obey him. *Anſ.* *The Covenant of grace maketh the ſignification of the terms of the Law to be new.* *when Moſes ſaith, Lev. 18. 5. do this and live, he ſpeaketh of the old ſignification of the terms of the Law do it in thine own perſon, according to the Covenant made in* Horeb. *Exod. 20. But when Moſes ſpeaketh of the righte-*

Therefore when the Law was given, the Goſpel is ſet before, wherein God giveth himſelf unto us, that we might love him, before he requireth any thing from us. And in the firſt Commandment he layeth this prohibition upon us, (*which alſo runneth through all the ten*

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Commandments) that we ſeek after no preparative righteouſneſs to precede the Goſpel. So that to do the Law, is to do it according to the Goſpel and the firſt Commandment, which is not to depend upon the Law. Therefore when it is ſaid bleſſed are they that do his Commandments that their right may be in the tree of Life, thou muſt underſtand it according to the Goſpel and the firſt Commandment, where by doing his Commandments is meant not depending upon the Law, which opinion in us of ſelf dependance is the firſt thing which is taken away by the Goſpel, and goeth imediately before our eſtabliſhing in Chriſt.

uſneſs of faith. Deut. 30. 14. *Which he calleth alſo alſo the keeping of the commandments* Ver. 10. 11. Rev. 22. *He ſpeaketh of the new ſignification of the terms of the Law according to the Covenant made in the Land of Moab.* Deut. 29. Ver. 1. *The firſt of theſe pertains to the ſelf juſticiary, the latter to the broken hearted.*

All this hinders not, but that the Law is to be done before men to the utmoſt of our power, in the Kingdom of the Law our obedience muſt be perſonal, which not withſtanding helpeth nothing to righteouſneſs, becauſe it is prevented by faith in Chriſt. Now herein alſo the ſweetneſs of Chriſts mouth is ſeen, in that he teacheth by the Goſpel a new underſtanding of the Law.

Thirdly, The ſweetneſs of Chriſts mouth is ſeen in this alſo, in that he teacheth the true reaſon of the inſtitution of Sacraments, which in all ages of the Church were to teach faith in Chriſt, Sacraments were not inſtituted to aſſure us that we have faith; or to confirm to us that we do believe, but to aſſure us by a figure of the viſible ground of our faith that we might believe, that our faith might be Sacra-

Sacramental as well as verbal: that we might learn the miſtery of our faith by and from the figure.

Thus by Circumciſion God did eſtabliſh his *Covenant* with *Abraham* to be his God, and the God of his ſeed, and why was this? But only from the figure to teach him to believe. *Gen.* 17. 7.

And when circumciſion is ſaid to be a Seal of the righteouſneſs of faith, it is, becauſe it confirmeth by a figure the righteouſneſs which faith layeth hold upon. *Rom.* 4.

And under the figure of the Paſſover they were taught to believe their deliverance, from ſin and the wrath of God by the blood of Chriſt. *Exod.* 12. 13.

So the reaſon why Baptiſm was inſtituted, was to manifeſt Chriſt unto *Iſrael*, John 1. 31. It looketh not upon the worthineſs of the perſon, but teacheth to behold our unworthineſs that we may be made worthy in Chriſt.

So the Lords Supper, was inſtituted to fulfil the Paſſover and ſhew us the Lords death, that we might have a viſible, and Sacramental ground to believe that he is crucified and riſen for us. Now theſe being the cauſes why Sacraments were inſtituted it is proving and not to be proved: therefore no unworthineſs in the Subjects muſt be alleaged to bar their priviledg, that ſtands in oppoſition to the reaſons of their inſtitution. So that we ſee Chriſts mouth is ſweet in that he openeth theſe three points, the ground of our faith, the ſenſe of the Law, *Luk.* 22.

and

and the reaſon of the inſtitution of Sacraments. Which I conceive are the three gates ſpoken of *Rev.* 21. which pertain to the holy City new *Jeruſalem*, on the *Eaſt*, *Weſt*, *North*, and *South* ſide of the Heavenly City, without the opening of which three gates there is no entrance into the new *Jeruſalem*. For let the ground of faith be ever ſo well opened, which is the firſt gate, if the terms of the Law be not alſo opened, and the ſignification made known, no man can enter, for the Law will be a ſtumbling block to his faith and keep him out. But admit this gate be alſo opened, if the third be ſhut, the reaſon why Sacraments were inſtituted, no man can paſs into the City. For if the Sacraments belong not to me before I am worthy, then is the ground of my faith which is the firſt gate ſhut again, then alſo is the firſt Commandment, and the ſenſe of the whole Law, which is the ſecond gate alſo ſhut: Nay then are all the gates kept faſt lock'd up, that no paſſenger can paſs into the holy City new *Jeruſalem* for evermore, but muſt remain without, and ſuffer the loſs of Eternal life, and happineſs. Conſider of theſe things with wiſdom, and ſee whether his mouth be not moſt ſweet, and whether he be not altogether lovely, as the bride here ſingeth.

And when ſhe ſaith, *this is my beloved, and my friend*; ſhe ſheweth the Daughters what the true Preaching of the Goſpel is, and that where this order and method is not obſerved, Chriſt

Chriſt is very little known, or regarded. Therefore ſhe ſaith, he that thus Preacheth the Goſpel is my friend. This is the beautiful perſon that bringeth the glad tidings of peace and good things.

This is the interpreter one of a thouſand, O ye Daughters of *Jeruſalem:* and the chiefeſt of ten thouſand unto me, for although I had ten thouſand inſtructers, yet this is the Doctrine which begetteth, and preſerveth me in Chriſt, and in this Doctrine will I rejoyce.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

VERSE I.

Whither is thy beloved gone? O thou fairest among women, whither is thy beloved turned aside? That we may seek him with thee.

AFTER the Bride had set forth the praises, of her beloved in the former Chapter, and the benefits that she receiveth from him through faith alone: the Daughters, in stead of receiving of him, make this enquiry, *whether is thy beloved gone?* When the Kingdom of Heaven is brought near, even to the very dores, as it is whereſoever Chriſt is truly Preached, yet the Daughters know not how to faſten upon him by faith alone, but imagine to find him ſome other way.

In ſtead of embracing the true Chriſt, which is preſent to faith: they ſeek after an imaginary Chriſt, which is to be found (*as they conceive*) in the works of the Law. So great an enemy is carnal reaſon to faith, that it cannot endure

endure to receive any thing from God: but ſtill dreameth to bring ſomething to him firſt, thinking thereby to procure acceptance with him.

So that this queſtion, *whether is thy beloved gone?* Sheweth their ignorance in the faith, and knowledg of the Son of God. And this is the miſery of all men, until God openeth the eyes of their underſtanding; that when Chriſt is preached, and nothing is wanting but only faith to receive him, then to dream of a Chriſt, that we think may be found in the Law. Which is no better, then to forſake that Doctrine and Religion, which bindeth us to Chriſt that is come: and to caſt our ſelves under the prophecy of a Chriſt to come, which Chriſt is no where to be found.

We muſt therefore believe, that where the true Goſpel is preached, Chriſt is not gone but come, there he is preſent, and no where elſe to be found; which muſt alſo quicken our underſtandings, to ſeek him in the Goſpel, and ſtop our imaginations from ſeeking after him in the works of the Law.

Note alſo here, that the daughters give the Bride the Title, *of the faireſt among women*, and yet affirm, that ſhe is too ſeeking *of her beloved*, which is a plain contradiction. For if ſhe be the faireſt, then it is becauſe the righteouſneſs of Chriſt is imputed to her whereby ſhe is made fair: but if ſhe be yet too ſeeking *of her beloved*, then ſhe remaineth with-

without the righteousnes of Christ imputed, and abideth in her filthines, under the Law and condemnation.

Therefore the Daughters when they call *her the faireſt amongſt women*, affirm, (nothing leſs, *then that ſhe is made ſo by faith alone:*) the principal cauſe thereof to be her own righteouſnes the works of the Law. It is agreed between them, that it is the righteouſnes of Christ alone, that maketh righteous perſons in the ſight of God: but the difference lieth in this, whether it be the righteouſnes of Christ, inherent in himſelf and imputed to faith, or the righteouſnes of Christ communicated, whereby good works are wrought to become righteouſnes before God? The Bride ſaith, it is by his righteouſnes imputed, and therefore in drawing the benefits of Christ into the Conſcience, ſhe teacheth faith alone: The Daughters ſay, it is by his righteouſnes communicated, therefore in teaching the Goſpel, they always reprove an idle faith, and require a working faith.

The Daughters do not deny the righteouſnes of faith, according as they define faith, which is, to believe the Hiſtory of Chriſts ſufferings, and that there is an all ſufficiency in them, to ſatisfy Divine Juſtice, if they make them their own: but ſay they, thou art yet wanting in this, until thou findeſt ſome thing inherent in thy ſelf which muſt evidence thy faith to be true.

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Therefore, thou muſt further ſeek after thy beloved, to have an evidence from thy works, to witneſs thy faith. So that all they do, upon the matter is but this, to give her a name to live: but by their principles they judg her to be dead.

For they tell her that ſhe is not compleatly juſtified, becauſe the righteouſneſs of Chriſt is but begun in her: She wanteth the righteouſneſs of the Law to make it perfect. For whether is thy beloved gone ſay they? Whether is thy beloved turn'd aſide, that we may ſeek him with thee? Thou haſt loſt thy beloved by thy faith, if thou defineſt faith after no other manner. Therefore leave off thy ſtrange definition of faith, that we may ſeek him with thee, and let us be unanimous in matters of love and good works, and let ſuch niceties alone in matters of faith. So that the Daughters in this place, do not only take away from the Bride, the white raiment, the pure righteouſneſs of Chriſt, whereby ſhe is cloathed from the wrath of God: and leave her in her own filthineſs as in the day of her Nativity, but alſo, they take away from Chriſt, his name, his office and glory: making of Chriſt, in ſtead of a Juſtifier and Saviour, nothing but a Miniſter of ſin, and condemnation. According to St. *Paul* in his allegations againſt the falſe Apoſtles, If while we ſeek to be made righteous by Chriſt, we our ſelves are yet found ſinners, that is, have need of the righteouſneſs

of the Law, to evidence or perfect our faith, without which evidence, we remain yet ſinners and unjuſtified, then Chriſt is nothing to us but a Miniſter of ſin, for then have we no more by Chriſt, then by the Law, which is life if we keep it, but death if we break it.

This ſpeech of the Daughters, is the true picture of what manner of Preachers there ſhall be in ſome places of the Church in all ages, even ſuch that ſhall ſpeak of the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and much extol the ſame: but nothing in compariſon of the righteouſneſs of the Law. That although they lay down the righteouſneſs of Chriſt to a Conſcience in diſtreſs, upon no other ground but that it believeth, yet they ſhall with the Daughters, underſtand faith after no other manner, nor teach the principles of it any otherwiſe, but by requiring the works of the Law: accounting the chief beloved to be wanting until that righteouſneſs be had. For ſay they, the buſineſs that Chriſt came into the world for was to Redeem us from our Sins, and this Redemption is ours by faith, but when they come to define, what this faith is: they can teach no other definition of it, but a mans actual conformity to the Law of God. And therefore by their Doctrine and manner of teaching, they require nothing but only a ſtrict conformity to Gods Law, that ſo an evidence may be had of faith in Chriſt.

This

This is with the Daughters, to call the Bride the faireſt amongſt women by reaſon of her faith; and yet to hide the righteouſneſs of Chriſt from the Conſcience whereby ſhe is made fair.

Beſides, if a man muſt have the righteouſneſs of Chriſt and of the Law both before he can be juſtified before God, and have any aſſurance of it in his Conſcience: why do they not then preſcribe a meaſure, how far a man muſt go in matter of works, before he can be aſſured that his faith is true, that ſo a man may know when his labour is at an end?

That manner of Doctrine reproveth not unbelief, but eſtabliſheth in man an opinion of his works, and plainly ſheweth: that our inherent righteouſneſs (contrary to St. *Paul*) and not our confeſſed unrighteouſneſs doth commend the righteouſneſs of God. *Rom.* 3.5.

Theſe are they whoſe Doctrine ends in contradictions, who confeſs the Bride in word to be the faireſt amongſt women by faith alone, but in deed and in truth, that even then, ſhe is too ſeeking of her beloved. For whether ſay they, is thy beloved gone that we may ſeek him with thee? To which it is anſwered by the Bride in the next verſe as followeth.

Verse II.

My beloved is gone down into his Garden, to the beds of ſpices, to feed in the Gardens; and to gather Lillies.

IN which words ſhe ſheweth where her beloved is to be found, namely in his garden, among the ſpiritual people, that hear and follow his voice. So that although he be gone, yet he is not gone from her ſelf, but from the Daughters: whoſe Doctrine doth wholly abrogate the Goſpel, and crucifie the ſon of God, darken and deface all the benefits of his victory and Kingdom. Therefore doth Chriſt depart, and reſt himſelf where his word is entertained and kept. According as St. *Paul* ſaid to the *Jews*, ſeeing ye judg your ſelves unworthy of Eternal life, *Lo we turn to the Gentiles.*

And when ſhe ſaith to the beds of ſpices, ſhe meaneth, to all thoſe in all places of the world, whoſe minds and Conſciences are perfumed with the ſweet ſmell of his Heavenly Doctrine: there Chriſt feedeth, helpeth, comforteth and refreſheth them, in all times of miſery and diſtreſs.

And by gathering Lillies, ſhe meaneth, that by that Doctrine which is deſpiſed of men: doth Chriſt gather all his Lillies unto himſelf.

Which

Which ſheweth us what the the true Office of the Miniſtry is, namely to feed thoſe that are already planted in the Church of God: and to gather to the faith of Chriſt, thoſe that are ignorant of the ſame. And ſo to beſprinkle the Heavedly ſpice into the minds and Conſciences of the hearers: that every one in the Garden may ſmell, even as a bed of Spices.

VERSE III.

I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine, he feedeth among the Lillies,

BY theſe words the Bride overcometh the Doctrine of the Daughters totally, who endeavour by their principles to ſtrip her of the Title of Bride, becauſe ſhe wanteth the righteouſneſs of the Law to perfect her faith. To which ſhe anſwereth. If my beloved hath owned me, then am I his Bride: but my beloved hath owned me, therefore am I his Bride. Again, *If I am my beloveds, then is my beloved alſo mine*, by an inſeparable union which can never be broken. By this argument ſhe daſheth in pieces at one blow, the whole Kingdom of *Satan*. For grant their arguments might be cunning, yet can they never overcome, ſo long

as this faith of application remaineth. And when it is ſaid, *he feedeth among the Lillies*; ſhe meaneth, with this faith of application, which is rich feeding by which he feedeth all that are his, againſt the fear of death and all evil, unto Eternal life.

With this argument alſo, muſt we learn to overcome, when the Conſcience is in fear and diſtreſs by reaſon of any adverſary. Then muſt we lay down this for a certain propoſition, that we are the elect and choſen of God. Now if I am choſen of God, *then am I my beloved's: and if I am my beloved's, then is my beloved alſo mine.* This argument *Satan* can never endure, therefore he will muſter up his forces againſt it becauſe hereby we build our foundation upon Chriſt alone: upon Gods laying claim unto us firſt, and not by way of reflection.

Joh. 15. 16.

This foundation will never fail us, becauſe we ground our faith from a principle that is true. Our way is not the true way to life, becauſe we believe 'tis the true, (for then *Heretick*s and *Seducers* were in the right) but we do and ought to believe a thing becauſe 'tis true. This is to give honour and glory to the truth of God; which is the higheſt and greateſt ſervice that can be given unto him.

Therefore, when thou art in miſery and knoweſt not what to do, be thy calamity what it will, begin thy faith, where God begins to thee. But thou wilt ſay, how is that? I anſwer, fear

fear not *Iſrael* thou art mine, hear O *Iſrael* I am thine. Mark thoſe two places of Scripture, and make thy application accordingly. From whence alſo note, that he calleth thee by a new name *Iſrael*, a prevailer with God, on purpoſe that thou mighteſt learn thereby to believe in him and love him. When thou haſt learned thus to ground thy faith, and to make application of Goſpel: then ſhalt thou eaſily underſtand, and find by thine own experience, the meaning of that Text, I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not, and lead them in paths that they have not known. Foraſmuch as the common way that is known, is, that firſt we muſt pleaſe God, before he will own and accept of us: but the way which is not known, and that God reveals, is, that he loveth and owneth us firſt, teacheth us, to be diſpleaſed with our ſelves, and ſo maketh us a people for his glory. This is the way of the Lord, and thus he feedeth his Lillies: and they that well taſt hereof, are nouriſhed up in peace and comfort. *Eſa.* 43.1. *Iſal.* 50.7.

With this one argument thou mayeſt drive the *Divel* and all his inſtruments into Hell from whence they came.

For thoſe words, *I am thine, and thou art mine*, are not thy words, but the words of God thy Heavenly Father: who owneth thee, and hath given himſelf unto thee.

Reſt thou therefore in this concluſion, and if any quarrel thereat, ſend them to thy

Heavenly Father that made the promiſe, and bid them aske him, why he look'd upon ſo vile a perſon as thou art, and why he made the way to life ſo eaſy as to believe and live. Then ſhalt thou alſo find, his word to become an hiding place in all ſtorms, and a Sanctuary in the day of heat.

Verse IV.

Thou art beautiful, my Love, as Tirza, *comely as* Jeruſalem, *terrible as an Army with Banners.*

These are the words of Chriſt, who beholding the faith of his ſpouſe, can no longer hold, but breaketh out into this commendation of her, *thou art beautiful my love.* And the cauſe is, in regard ſhe ſticketh to the true principles of faith: whereby ſhe is imputed fair.

Therefore he telleth her, thou art the Royal *Diadem*, thou beareſt the renown.

Which ſheweth us clearly, wherein the praiſe of the Church conſiſteth: even in believing and contending for that faith which was once given to the Saints.

First,

Firſt, he likeneth her beauty to *Tirza*, a City where the Kings of *Iſrael* did reign, and keep their Courts. The King was preſent there, which made the City beautiful. And that which makes the Church ſo beautiful in Chriſts eye, is becauſe ſhe liveth in the Kings Court, ſhe holdeth Chriſt by the hand of faith alone. Others contend for works firſt: to all thoſe Chriſt is abſent. All ſuch do want the beauty of *Tirza*; and may rightly be called *Ichabod*, becaute from them the glory is departed.

Next, ſhe is commended for her comelineſs, comely as *Jeruſalem*. *Jeruſalem* was comely in regard God himſelf choſe to dwell in it. In which City the Temple was built, wherein the Ark was kept, and alſo the golden Pot that had *Manna*, which was to ſhew the wonderful works of God to poſterity. And *Aarons* rod that budded, which was kept to ſtill the murmerings of the people againſt the Magiſtracy and Miniſtry. And the two Tables of the Covenants. For theſe things *Jeruſalem* is ſaid to be comely. And alſo by the *Pſalmiſt*, to be fair in Scituation, the joy of the whole Earth. *Pſal.* 48. 2.

In theſe things likewiſe, the praiſe of this Heavenly City the New *Jeruſalem* conſiſteth. In that ſhe alone liveth in the ſight of peace, in the ſight of the Temple and the Ark, hath the right uſe of her Baptiſm, the true knowledg

ledg of the Tables: feedeth upon the hid *Manna* in the Golden Pot, and hath the true underſtanding of *Aarons* Rod that budded, herein lyeth her happineſs, beauty, and glory, in that ſhe conformeth in all theſe things. Therefore ſhe is ſaid to be comely and the joy of the whole Earth, in that ſhe receiveth and teacheth the free grace of her Redeemer, and cheerfully obeyeth him in all things.

And in that ſhe is Terrible as an Army with Banners, it meaneth againſt all thoſe that are adverſaries to her Faith and Doctrine. And ſo Terrible, that by this one argument, *I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine:* all her adverſaries are confounded, and driven down to Hell. This argument therefore is the Banner of the Church, and alſo a matter of commendation, with this Banner muſt we defend our ſelves, and under it muſt we rejoyce.

VERSE V.

Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me: thine hair is like a flock of Goats that appear from Gilead.

IT is as if Chriſt had ſaid this, thou art ſo beautiful and comely in my ſight, and ſo Terrible to all mine adverſaries, in regard of thy faith and Doctrine; that thou haſt even overcome me: which ſheweth us, wherein the delight of Chriſt chiefly lyeth; namely in this, when the word of God is ſo underſtood and ſtuck unto by faith, that by it the Kingdom of *Satan* may be broken in pieces. Now in that Chriſt ſays, turn away thine eyes from me, he meaneth not to another lover: but explaineth his meaning in the next words, *thine hair is like a flock of Goats*, by which he meaneth the faithful, who are likened to hair, becauſe even as hair groweth from, and hangeth on the head, ſo do they all hang upon their head the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Therefore Chriſt ſaith, turn about thine eyes to them, and Preach the Goſpel to them, that they alſo may be ſtrong in the Lord. *See Song* 4. & 2. As alſo for the Churches Teeth and Temples.

There

Verse VIII.

There are threeſcore Queens, and fourſcore Concubines, and Virgins without number.

BY Queens I underſtand all thoſe that make ſeparation from the worſhip of God in Church aſſemblies. Theſe are ſaid to be threeſcore, which is an indefinite ſpeech: meaning, there are multitudes of them. And they are all Queens, that is, in their own conceit and imaginations, they all think themſelves ſo to be. The opinion of them all is ſet down in *Eſai.* 47. *I am and none elſe.* And in *Rev.* 18. *I ſit a Queen, and am no widow.* The meaning I conceive is this. I am the only Bride or Queen of Chriſt, and there is none elſe, but only thoſe of my way, and this is the opinion of every Sect. And their opinion is not only ſet down, but alſo the reaſon of it, *I am no widow.* Now to be a widow cannot be until the Husband be dead: but when the Husband is dead, the woman is a widow.

Rom. 7.

They that glory in the Law are condemned by the Law.

And ſhe that calleth her ſelf a Queen, is the Church in her own eſteem, and her Husband is the Law. And in that ſhe glorieth in her married condition, it ſheweth, ſhe is not dead to the Law, but under the dominion and power of

of the Law. So that I am no widow, is as much as to ſay, I am not divorced from, nor dead in reſpect of the Law: but I dilligently ſollow the works of the Law, therefore am I the true ſpouſe, or Queen of Chriſt. The ſum is, ſhe boaſteth in the righteouſneſs of the Law; becauſe (as ſhe ſuppoſeth) ſhe walketh according to the Law, which is the opinion of every Sect.

The *Concubines* are thoſe that do not make a local ſeparation from the Church, but live in viſible communion with her: yet have no part nor ſhare in the inheritance of God. For *Concubines* it ſeemeth, were ſuch as were taken into the Family, as appears by *Hagar, Abrahams Concubine*, and alſo by *Solomons Concubines:* yet bare no rule in the Family as Wifes, neither did their Children pertake of the inheritance, as is to be ſeen by the caſting out of *Hagar* and her Son.

Nevertheleſs they had great gifts beſtowed upon them, for although *Abraham* as a figure of God gave all his inheritance to *Iſaac:* yet unto the Sons of the *Concubines*, *Hagar* and *Keturah*, *Abraham* gave gifts and ſent them away into the Eaſt Coutry. *Gen.* 25.

Theſe *Concubines* jointly conſidered are nothing elſe, but the bondwoman, who although ſhe liveth in viſible Society with the Bride, yet ſhe gendereth her Children unto bondage.

Theſe

Theſe are ſaid to be fourſcore, which is alſo a certain number for an uncertain, meaning, there are multitudes of theſe ſort of people that keep a wonderful ſtir in the Family of God, chiefly, about government and ruling, that would *(if they knew how)* fain bear ſway in the Family in outward goverment yet have no authority as the Wife, who ruleth all things through faith in Chriſt.

By the Virgins without number, underſtand the companions of the Bride, who are not yet converted, yet not oppoſers, but well wiſhers to the Bride: that are not yet brought, but that ſhall be brought unto her; according to the *Pſalmiſt*. *Pſal. 45.*

Theſe are called Virgins, becauſe they ought to be undefiled in reſpect of their faith: and to look with a ſingle eye upon the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Verse IX.

My dove my undefiled is but one, ſhe is the only one of her Mother: the choiſe one of her that bare her——

THe Queens and Concubines are many, and are alſo of many opinions in matters of Religion: but *my dove is but one.* One in regard of

of univerſality, and one in reſpect of unity. She endeavoureth to keep the unity of the *Eph.* 4. ſpirit in the bond of peace. And in that ſhe is ſaid to be undefiled, it ſheweth, that the Queens and Concubines are ſuch as are defiled in heart and Conſcience before God; though outwardly they may ſeem to appear righteous before men. The cauſe of their defilement is, becauſe they all ſay, *I ſit a Queen, and am no widow*, they all boaſt in the Law: therefore ſaith the Holy Ghoſt, ſhall her plagues come at one day, death and mourning and famine; *Rev.* 18. for ſtrong is the Lord God that will condemn her. Becauſe ſhe truſteth in the wickedneſs of her own opinion: therefore her own opinion ſhall condemn her. By all which we ſee, that although the Queens and Concubines are the only righteous perſons in their own eyes: yet ſhe that mourneth for her ſins, is the only excellent creature in Chriſts ſight. And why is ſhe ſo excellent? Even becauſe ſhe preſenteth her ſelf before him not a righteous perſon but a ſinner, by her principles, and asketh forgiveneſs of the ſame. The Queens and Concubines are ſinners in word, but by their principles they ſeek juſtification in the Law, which ſheweth, that in heart and opinion they are not ſinners by the Law. That they ſeek juſtification by the Law appears, in that they teach a neceſſity of the Law: from which alſo flowes another evil, which conſiſteth, in deſtroying the right end of all obedience to the Law: which

which is, not to become righteous and juſt before God, but that I may with a cheerful heart do good unto my Neighbour.

Underſtand this no neceſſity only in the matter of juſtification.

But the Bride teacheth no neceſſity of the Law, therefore, by her principles ſhe preſenteth her ſelf a ſinner before God by the Law: now becauſe ſhe ſeparateth the Law from the judgment ſeat, therefore ſhe layeth down the ground of all good works, and alſo ſheweth the right end of the Law. And therefore ſhe is ſaid to be, as it here followeth, *the only one of her Mother.*

Gal. 4.26. *The Mother is* Jeruſalem *which is above the Mother of us all.* By which is meant the univerſal Church. For *Sarah* the freewoman (*which* Paul *is there treating of*) was the Mother of *Iſaac*, and a type of the New Teſtament: which *Iſaac* was born by promiſe. For *Abraham* had *Iſaac* by *Sarah*, and he had alſo *Iſhmael* by *Hagar* his *Concubine*. Both theſe Sons were born in *Abrahams* Family which was the viſible Church of God. *Iſaac* was born by promiſe: but *Iſhmael* was born without the promiſe of God.

In *Abrahams* Family then, there are the two Teſtaments, and a twofold Mother. The one is *Agar* (figuring the Law) which (*being without the promiſe of God*) gendereth all her Children unto bondage. The other is *Sarah* which is called the freewoman, being a type of the true Church, which giveth the Goſpel freely, without the works of the Law.

She

She that after this manner gendereth Children unto God, is the only one of her Mother. The *Concubine* is without this praiſe, becauſe ſhe gendereth from *Sina:* therefore is ſhe under the curſe and wrath of God. Now as *Iſaac* is the heir becauſe he is born by promiſe; So the Children of the freewoman, are the only Sons and heirs of God by Adoption. And as *Iſhmael* was a ſervant, caſt out of *Abrahams* Family, and never to have any ſhare in the inheritance with *Iſaac:* So the Law only maketh men ſervants, ſubject to the wrath of God, and ſeparateth them from the glorious inheritance of the Saints for evermore.

Let us learn then ſo to underſtand the Goſpel that we may become Children of the freewoman, which thou canſt not do, unleſs thou renounce the bondwoman and her Son. Therefore when thy Conſcience is in diſtreſs, and thou feeleſt thy ſelf to be in bondage, under the curſe of the Law and wrath of God; and thou beginneſt to humble thy ſelf before him, ſtop thine ears then from hearing the Law, either for what thou haſt done, or what thou oughteſt to have done, and hearken only to the comfortable voice of the promiſe: which ſpeaketh nothing but grace and mercy, to a poor Creature that feeleth his miſery, and ſuffer the ſame to make an impreſſion within thee. Then ſhalt thou have a certain feeling within thy ſelf, that although thou art defiled in thine own eyes, becauſe thou haſt broken thy bounds;

yet that thou art undefiled in the ſight of thy beloved, in regard thou receiveſt grace and mercy from him.

——*The Daughters ſaw her, and bleſſed her, yea, the Queens and the Concubines, and they praiſed her.*

To bleſs in Scripture ſometimes ſignifies to juſtify, ſo God bleſſeth us when he juſtifieth us. But a man may be ſaid to juſtify another, when he followeth the practice of another. Thus *Jeruſalem* is ſaid to juſtifie her Siſters, *Samaria*, and *Sodom*, by following their abominations. And this I underſtand in another ſenſe to be the meaning here by the Daughters bleſſing, and the Queens and Concubines praiſing the Bride. Which is, they followed the practice of the Bride. They do not condemn, but bleſs or juſtify the practice of the Bride. But it may be ſaid in what? I anſwer, in ſeeking after a Chriſt. All manner of *Sects* and *Hereticks*, do ſeek after a Chriſt: but not after the true Chriſt. There is a great difference in ſeeking after a Chriſt, and the Chriſt: A Saviour all people ſeek after, (*every man maketh unto himſelf ſome God or other. Make us Gods to go before us ſay the people to Aaron*) but few there are, that ſeek after the Saviour. The *Iſralites* ſought after a Chriſt, when they ſought him in the works of the Law, but could never find him:

Pſal. 32. 1, 2.

Eze. 16.

Exod. 1. 32.

him: *but the Gentiles which ſought him by faith without the works of the Law, found the Chriſt.* And in this ſenſe it is ſaid, I was found of them that ſought me not. Rom. 9. 32.

Now if the Queens and Concubines do bleſs and praiſe themſelves, (*as in heart they do*) in ſeeking after a Chriſt; then they do alſo bleſs and praiſe the Bride in ſeeking after the Chriſt.

Alſo if it be good in them, (*as in their opinion it is good*) to ſeek for a Chriſt: then it is alſo good and very good in the bride, to ſeek for the Chriſt, which is the true Chriſt indeed. They all agree in word, *that Jeſus is the true Chriſt*, but the Queſtion is, how to ſeek him ſo as to find him? The *Queens* and *Concubines* ſay, thou muſt live in an active conformity to the Law of God, then ſhalt thou have an evidence of thy faith in Chriſt: but the Bride ſaith, in the firſt place thou muſt ſeek him by faith without the Law, otherwiſe thou muſt die in thy ſins. For ſo ſaith Chriſt to the *Jews*, *ye ſhall ſeek me, and not find me, and ſhall die in your ſins.* Joh. 3.

It is the duty of all men to live in obedience to the Law, but to ſeek for a Chriſt in the Law is to deny the Goſpel.

This ſheweth us the reaſon why the Daughters, the *Queens* and *Concubines* are ſo earneſt in preſſing the works of the Law, why they require it of neceſſity under the penalty of Everlaſting damnation: and alſo why they are ſo rigid, ſo ſevere, and look ſo loftily upon thoſe poor Creatures, that have groſly broken the Law, as if they themſelves were made of

purer metal, the reaſon is, becauſe they ſeek for a Chriſt in the Law.

And alſo it ſheweth us, why the godly can ſubmit, give place to all, do not count themſelves for a rule, for all men to conform unto, (*in reſpect of their outward carriage*) but are willing to yeild, to obey, not to ſeparate themſelves from ſinners, but to equalize themſelves with the worſt: to ſhew kindneſs and reſpect to all, to friends and foes, good and bad, worthy and unworthy, on purpoſe to gain their hearts, and win their affections (*if it be poſſible*) to love and embrace the Goſpel, the reaſon is, becauſe they have found thee Chriſt, the true *Meſſias*, without the Law.

Hence it comes to paſs, that when the Daughters come to die, (*for want of a right underſtanding in this point*) and ſin begins to appear in the Conſcience, they know not how to faſten upon any one promiſe, nor to pray with any manner of confidence, but are even fore'd to cry out with thoſe that had crucified the Lord of life, *men and brethren what ſhall we do to be ſaved?* All this comes to paſs, becauſe they have ſpent all their time in ſeeking for a Chriſt, a ſuppoſed, an imaginary Chriſt, but none for the Chriſt, which is the true Chriſt indeed: According to S. *Paul*, *The Gentiles which followed not righteouſneſs, have attained to righteouſneſs, even the righteouſneſs of faith: but* Iſrael *which followed after righteouſneſs, have not attained to the law of righteouſneſs, becauſe they ſought*

Acts 2.37.

Rom. 9.30.

ſought it not by faith, but in the works of the law.

Therefore ſeeing Chriſt ſaith here, *That the daughters bleſſed her*; alſo *that the Queens and Concubines by their practiſe praiſed her*, in ſeeking after a Chriſt, which they ſought only in the works of the law, and therefore they could not find him: Let us learn rightly to ſeek after Chriſt by faith, that ſo when we ſeek him, we may not ſeek him in vain.

VERSE X.

Who is ſhe that looketh forth as the Morning?——

BY *looking forth as the morning*, Chriſt meaneth the preaching of the Goſpel, which is the light of the World: for even as the Night is a time of darkneſs, and while the darkneſs remains, no man can tell whether he goeth: So before the Goſpel cometh, there is nothing but abominable darkneſs, blindneſs and blaſphemy in the world. And alſo, as when the Morning cometh, it expelleth darkneſs and bringeth light; ſo the Goſpel is that bright and morning Star, that ſendeth into the world the light of life. The Goſpel doth not find men holy, but maketh them holy; for the Morning doth not find men light, but bringeth the light, therefore the Goſpel is not to be ſo preached

to a people as if they were all Believers before; only shewing them how they should walk in the world, but so taught that it may make Believers. Therefore Christ saith, *As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world:* which could not be if the Gospel did not teach us a certainty of our faith: for how can that be a light unto me, that only requireth certain things to be believed and done, if it doth not also shew me a certain way how I may attain the same? This Light we have by the Gospel, which maketh a merry heart, and a joyful conscience.

Let us learn then, so to hear and understand the Gospel, that we may come under this note of Admiration, and also that by the shining light of that bright and Morning-Star, we may learn to cast off the works of darkness, and to put on the armour of light.

——*Fair as the Moon.*——

The Church is likened to the Moon, because her brightness is by a borrowed light, even from Christ the Sun of righteousness, and Fountain of light: And this light she preacheth in the World. And also, because as the Moon she shineth in the Night, and is created to rule the Night: (For God set two great Lights in the Firmament of Heaven to give light upon the earth, *the greater light to rule the Day, and the lesser light to rule the night:*) For although

Gen. 1.

although the Moon hath her defects and riſings, ſometimes increaſeth, and is ſometimes more obſcure, appearing in divers forms and figures in the Firmament; yet is ſhe a Planet created to rule the Night. Therefore the Bride is here likened to the Moon, becauſe ſhe is ſet to give light upon the Earth; and becauſe by the light that ſhe giveth, ſhe is to rule the Night. She giveth not her own light upon the earth which ſhe hath naturally; but a borrowed light which ſhe receiveth from the Sun the Fountain of light, which light ſhe infuſeth into the midſt of darkneſs to expel the ſame: for although for a time the light of the Moon may be hidden, yet as ſoon as ſhe appeareth, the darkneſs expels.

Now in that the light of this heavenly Planet is from the Sun the Fountain of Light, and that the light which ſhe receiveth is to rule the Night, it ſheweth us what the proper Office of the Goſpel is, even to ſhine in our hearts, and to comfort us in a dark condition. This light is the Nativity of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who was born at *Bethlem*, which Nativity is given unto us by our hearing and receiving the Goſpel.

Therefore when thou feeleſt thy ſelf to be in darkneſs, and mightily oppreſſed with the ſhadows of the Night, make haſt into thy Cloſet, and ſay; Lord, I am in great affliction and ſore diſtreſs, and have juſtly deſerved by my ſin to periſh in the darkneſs I am in; but

seeing thou hast ordained, that I shall live before thee by a borrowed light, even by my Lord Jesus Christ who was born at *Bethlem*, where the glad-tidings of great joy were published by the heavenly Angel, grant therefore that I may believe the Message of the Angel, that so I may receive the whole benefit. At the very first time thou beginnest to practice after this manner, and feelest thy heart any whit warmed with the apprehension of the blessed Babe, that's the very day and hour that Christ is born in thee: Then art thou become *fair as the Moon*, and yet thou hast the Moon under thy feet; forasmuch as all thy defects and obscurities, changes and alterations, which made thee appear like the Moon in her weakest condition; yet now being cloathed with the Sun, thou despisest them all. When once thou understandest these things aright, then mayest thou arise and shine by thy borrowed light, and shall experimentally feel that of Christ, which thou thy self wilt say, thou knewest not before.

——Clear as the Sun——

This is meant in respect of her Doctrine, which is said to be clear as Chrystal; for as the Sun is the Fountain of Light natural, so is Christ the Fountain of Light spiritual, and Son of righteousness; which being made known to the world, maketh a great light. By this light every

every man that believeth, his Conſcience is acquitted from the wrath of God, and alſo is made to ſee the vanity of his ways, and is delivered from a vain mind. By this light he perceiveth wherein the errours of all men lie, is made a Judge of all things, yet he himſelf is judged of no man.

——*Terrible as an Army with Banners.*

This Doctrine is terrible to the blind world, and to the whole kingdom of Satan, that it batteretheall in pieces, even as an Army doth with Banners: For there is no Sect nor Hereſie upon the face of the earth, that can ſtand before the Goſpel; let the caſe be rightly ſtated, and the true ſtate of the buſineſs ſtuck unto on both ſides, and either he that oppoſeth it muſt fly, or elſe he muſt turn and be converted. Therefore it is ſaid of the Day of the Lord, *that it ſhall burn as an Oven, and ſhall burn up all the proud of the earth, and leave neither root nor branch.* Mal. 4. The Goſpel plucketh up the root of all Hereſies, and with the root the branch; foraſmuch as the principal matter whereupon all Hereticks and Sects build their confidence, is the very firſt thing which the Goſpel deſtroyeth. Therefore the Goſpel is a moſt terrible Doctrine to all the wicked of the earth: but moſt ſweet and pleaſant to all thoſe that conform unto it. And therefore Chriſt ſays, *I came to ſend fire upon the earth, and what is my deſire*

granates, it meaneth, to learn how to be afflicted for her ſin, and how to become low in her own eyes, like the Valley; and alſo how to be healed and exalted through the righteouſneſs of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that ſhe might rejoyce in the fruits of the Miniſtry. The ſum of the whole Verſe I conceive is this: That the main and principal buſineſs that concerns thoſe that are Preachers and Hearers of the Word of God, in frequenting publick Aſſemblies; is, to teach and to learn how to make and to heal again tender and afflicted conſciences. How to lay men low in their own eyes, that they may lament in ſecret for their ſins; and how to bind them up, and heal them with the righteouſneſs of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt: For this cauſe the Bride went down into the *Garden* to learn this heavenly Art and divine Skill. Where this learning is not taught, little is ſaid, and where this is not heard, little is learned. If the conſcience ſhould be afflicted and not healed again, it would fall into deſpair; or if a Plaiſter ſhould be provided where there is no ſore, no man would eſteem it, therefore the Church learneth both theſe points.

And the reaſon why this is the principal thing, is, becauſe this manner of learning maketh perſons new, it maketh men righteous before God, and alſo righteous before men: It maketh the Tree good, and his Fruit good; otherwiſe, where it is not taught, it leaveth the Tree evil, and his Fruit evil.

This

deſire but that it be kindled? Therefore no man muſt be afraid to maintain the Goſpel, for fear of the diſpleaſure of men, (for that is to deny Chriſt, and flatter all men into Hell) but every man according to his ability muſt endeavour to defend the ſame.

VERSE XI.

I went down into the Nut-garden to ſee the fruits of the Valley, and to ſee whether the Vine flouriſh'd, and the Pomegranates budded.

I Conceive theſe Words to be the Speech of the Church, and the meaning to be this: By *Garden* underſtand, the publick aſſembling together of the Faithful to preach and hear the Word of God. Call'd the *Nut-garden*, becauſe where the Word is rightly taught, there are ſweet Kernels found. By the *Valley* is meant, he that is made low in his own eyes, through the ſenſe and feeling of his ſin. The *Pomegranates* are the particular Members of the Church. The *Vine* is Chriſt: The *flouriſhing of the Vine is*, when the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt alone is taught for the raiſing up of dejected, afflicted Conſciences; and in that the Church *went down to ſee the fruits of the Valley*: The *flouriſhing of the Vine, and budding of the Pomegranates*;

Pſal. 19. 10
Eſa. 40. 4.
Song 4. 13
Job. 15. 1.

This sheweth us the reason, why (*in many places*) the labour of the Ministry is so unprofitable, why there is so little good done by Preaching, and so little benefit received by hearing, but men go away from Church assemblies as cold and blockish as ever they were, the reason is, because the drift and scope of their manner of handling the word of God, tendeth not to the making and healing again of tender and afflicted Consciences, but bendeth quite another way.

Hence they all call for doing of the Law, which neither maketh the wound, nor healeth the sore. And from this also it comes to pass, that if any man comes into the Garden and desireth for a kernel, he findeth but a shell, and in stead of making valleys, setting up of Mountains: the reason is, because the true way to life is hid; which to think on aright may cause a Lamentation, in that there is so little understood in this point, which is the only thing and foundation whereupon all our happiness doth depend.

Let all men therefore learn to humble themselves for their wants in this thing, and earnestly beg of God that his word may be purely taught. Where this knowledg is not, little fruit appears in the Valley, the Vine flourisheth not there, but the miserable Conscience is shut up in Prison and darkness; but where this spiritual skill is learn'd, there and there only, the

the *Pomegranates* do bud, and a wonderful and ſuddain change is made, according as it here followeth.

Verse XII.

Or ever I was aware, my Soul made me like the Chariots of Amminadib.

Amminadib as ſome think, was the chiefeſt Chariot driver, either in *Solomons* or in *Pharaohs* Chariot, and which had the moſt Famous Horſes: which upon a ſuddain would be at the place deſired. This was the Churches condition, as ſoon as ſhe came into the *Nut Garden*, ſhe underſtood upon a ſuddain the right way to her beloved: as ſoon as ever the nut was crack'd ſhe began to taſt of the kernel, and or ever ſhe was aware, ſhe became like the Chariots of *Amminadib*: She met with that upon a ſuddain, which ſhe had long deſired for. And thus it is with us when ever we come into the garden of the Lord where nuts are plenty, where the vine flouriſheth aright; or ever we are aware, the *Pomegranates* begin to bud, the fruits of the valley begin to appear within us, and we are ſetled in peace and joy. And in that ſhe ſays my Soul made me. It meaneth

the

the understanding, which being illuminated and sanctified, filleth the will and affections with joy and Heavenly delight.

Verse XIII.

Return, return, O Shulamite, that we may look upon thee, return, return:——

These words are also the voice of the Church, and by the *Shulamite* she meaneth a party in the Church, which do dissent from her principles in matters of faith and life: which she notwithstanding calleth the *Shulamite*, (*being a general Title belonging to all in the visible Church*) from *Shulamith* which is peaceable, so call'd being under a Covenant of peace, and being *the Daughter of Jerusalem, or Shalem which signifies peace, and his Tabernacle is also said to be in Shalem.* To this *Shulamite* or contrary party in the Church; she saith, *return, return,* which words being so often doubled do shew, that she is not only confident of her own Doctrine and way, but also that she earnestly desireth the welfare of the *Shulamite:* and a more near and Spiritual communion with her, for she says, return that we may look upon thee, that is, with delight and comfort, for what

Heb. 7.

what inward and comfortable fellowſhip can there be, ſo long as there remains a contrariety in points of Faith? Therefore it is the longing deſire of the Bride that they might dwell together in unity. But mark we what followes.

——*What will ye ſee in the Shulamite? as it were the Company of two Armies.*

Theſe words I conceive to be the voice of Chriſt, and it is as much as to ſay, that which thou wouldeſt ſee in the *Shulamite*, thou canſt not; for in the *Shulamite* there are two Companies of Prophets, are Preachers of the word, and they band themſelves one againſt the other, like two Armies. And the difference between them is, (*the caſe being rightly ſtated*) about this one Queſtion. Which is the proving principle in the Scriptures? Whether the Law muſt be expounded by the Goſpel, or the Goſpel expounded ſo as it may accord with the Law?

The anſwering of this Queſtion, endeth all controverſies in the Church. Foraſmuch as all differences about Religion do Center in this point. Hence it is, that what is affirmed by the one overthrows the Law in the matter of juſtification: and what is affirmed by the other, overthrows the Goſpel in the ſame point. For when

The extent of the principles of all Heriticks, Sects, and Seducers, being right-

Ly examined they will be found to clash against the Gospel in the Doctrine of justification.

when the Bride defineth faith to be a believing in Christ without works, (*only because of God the promiser*) totally excluding the Law; the *Shulamite* (*and all others that are enemies to the Gospel*) do define faith, to be a believing in Christ by reason of works, totally excluding the Gospel.

Now to decide this controversy, it must be noted, that the first principles (*as is shewed elsewhere in this Song*) are proving, and there-
Song 3.10. fore all other Scriptures must be expounded by them. And that as the first principle in
Hos. 13.4. Divinity is the Scriptures, so the first principle in the Scriptures is the Gospel (*or the first Commandment which drives us to the Gospel, which comes all to one*) for the first word of all is,
Mark. 12. 29. *hear O Israel I am the Lord thy God:* which words are the Gospel.

Wherein God bindeth himself to us, without any thing of ours: then follows the first
This point rightly understood draweth us into the practise of all good works, because it unbindeth us from the rigour of the Law, and filleth the mind and Conscience with the love of God, which is the ground of all obedience.

Commandment, which prohibites our dependance upon any other righteousness but the righteousness of God, set before us in the Gospel. And also forbids all such definitions of faith, and all such interpretations of the Law, which strengthen in man an opinion of the Law and works.

Now

Now the Goſpel being the firſt word and proving principle, therefore ſuch a ſenſe muſt be found of all thoſe Scriptures, that promiſe juſtification to mans Active doing of the Law, as may be ſuitable to the Goſpel, and mortify mans opinion of the Law and works. But thou wilt ſay, how ſhall I do that? I anſwer, doing in Divinity hath (*by reaſon of the Goſpel*) a new ſignification, which is to juſtify God, and is not to be underſtood (*when juſtification is promiſed to it*) of a moral doing, but of ſuch a ſpiritual paſſive doing which is incomprehenſible to mans reaſon, whereby thou ſubmitteſt to the wrath of the Law, and flyeſt from it by faith to Chriſt, who createth in thee a new opinion of the Law, which is to walk in the works thereof without dependance upon them: which obedience *Paul* teacheth thee to call, a ſerving in newneſs of Spirit. And thus mayeſt thou eaſily give an anſwer to all oppoſers of the Goſpel.

Moreover, this muſt alſo comfort us when we are in great tribulations, when we are in doubt of his care and providence in reſpect of outward things, or any way perplexed with the fear of Gods wrath: For then will the Law begin to work in us after this manner, theſe things thou haſt done, and thou canſt not deny it, and therefore thy judgment is juſt, and nothing ſhall appear before thine eyes which way

thy fears ſhall be prevented: now in this condition if thou expoundeſt the Goſpel according to the Law, then ſhall thy faith be overwhelmed, and only the Law ſhall reign, but if thou haſt learned this Divine and Heavenly Art to expound the Law by the Goſpel, then ſhall the Law vaniſh out of thy Conſcience, and Chriſt alone ſhall rule and govern.

Therefore in ſuch a condition as this, enter into thy cloſet and pray after this manner, *Lord*, I am in great diſtreſs and know not what to do, and the evils that I fear are juſtly coming upon me, *by reaſon of my ſin:* and if I ſhould now expound the Goſpel by the Law which is now upon me, then ſhould I be totally ruined without all hope of recovery, but ſeeing thou haſt taught me to expound the Law by the Goſpel, and not to make conſtruction of things according to ſenſe and reaſon: but according to thy holy and gracious promiſe, teach me to ſtick unto it ſo long as life ſhall laſt.

When once thou entereſt into this excerciſe of thy faith thou wilt quickly find the ſweet of it, and wilt not care a ruſh for any affliction. Then ſhalt thou experimently feel in thy ſelf, that although there be in the *Shulamite*, as it were, the company of two armies, the fleſh warring againſt the Spirit, and the Spirit warring againſt the fleſh, inwardly againſt the accuſations

tions and terrors of the Law, and outwardly againſt falſe Prophets and Seducers: yet that thou mayeſt eaſily overcome them by the Goſpel. And alſo ſhalt find, that this Battel cometh not to paſs, from the principles of the Goſpel: but from the natures of men, who by reaſon of blindneſs and wilfulneſs will not underſtand the ſame.

CHAP. VII.

VERSE I.

How beautiful are thy feet with ſhoes, O Princes Daughter!——

BY reaſon of the Churches Victory in this Battel, againſt *Satan* within, and *Satan* without, Chriſt commendeth her again. And firſt her feet and ſhoes are commended, ſhe being ſo well ſhod with the preparation of the Goſpel of peace: for then the feet are ſaid to be beautiful, when they are well furniſhed with the glad tidings of peace and good things, then do the feet ſtand upon holy ground.

Now when the Goſpel is made the ſtandard to try all Doctrines by, and alſo the only weapon to drive away the guilt of ſin, and all fears out of the Conſcience: then doth the Church obtain this Title, to be call'd the *Princes Daughter*. Then is ſhe looked upon no longer as coming from *Adam*, but as one who by her new birth, or Nativity is the *Daughter of a Prince*, even of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

For ſo Chriſt is ſaid to be the Everlaſting Father and Prince of peace, becauſe by his word he generateth Children to himſelf, to make them *Princes in all the Earth.* *Pſal.* 45.

For this cauſe alſo muſt we endeavour to receive the Goſpel, *that our feet may be well ſhod*, that our inward man may be made beautiful with the righteouſneſs of the Son of God: then ſhall we be look'd upon no longer, (*in reſpect of the Conſcience*) as Children of *Adam*, but *as Sons and Daughters of the living God.* For being ſeparated from *Adam*, we are likewiſe ſeparated from the curſe that lyeth upon *Adam* and all his poſterity.

Therefore, this muſt teach us whither to go when we are diſturbed either in our inward, or outward peace: even to him that is the *Prince of Peace:* And alſo what to do in caſe of wants, even to humble our ſelves upon our knees before the Prince, who being the Kings Son, and heir of all things, can deny us nothing who are become the *Princes Daughter.* We muſt not therefore be faithleſs but believing, then ſhall we alſo perform good works joyfully and thankfully before men: but if we forget or diſpiſe this Heavenly Title, then ſhall we remain in our old natural condition under the curſe; and the benefits of the new Nativity ſhall be utterly loſt.

——*The joints of thy thighs are like jewels, the work of a cunning Artificer.*

Next to the feet the joints are here commended, which muſt be underſtood as they are inſtruments to convey nouriſhment into the body. For the body is ſaid to increaſe by reaſon of the joints and bands, which miniſter nouriſhment one to another from every part: which cauſeth it to increaſe with the increaſings of God.

Col. 2.

Eph. 4.

The joints then are here commended in reſpect of their uſe and Office: which is to miniſter nouriſhment from the head to the reſt of the body. Theſe joints are the particular Members in the Church: which *are like jewels*, being wonderful precious in the eſtimation of the owner. Where theſe joints do rightly perform their Office, the body groweth ſtrong: (*but where there is a coldneſs and benumendneſs in the joints, the body groweth lame, and little agility will be ſeen,*) and there alſo are the Bridegrooms jewels. Therefore all thoſe that live in this Exerciſe, and do ſupply the Office of the joints, muſt believe that they are in high account in the ſight of their beloved: which muſt comfort and encourage every one in the body to perform his Office.

Next

Next, theſe are ſaid to be the *work of the hands of a cunning Artificer.* By the Artificer I underſtand the Preacher of the Goſpel, who is skilful in forming or planting Chriſt in the Soul. Who is able through the holy Ghoſt to teach a right diviſion between the Law and Goſpel in uſe and practice: that Chriſt may rule in the Conſcience, and the Law may govern the old man, which cannot be done but by the hand *of a cunning workman.* This is he that *Paul* ſpeaks of, when he ſays a workman that needeth not to be aſhamed, dividing the word of truth aright; where this skilful Artificer is, the Conſcience is kept pure and undefiled: but where there is daubing with untempered Morter, the Conſcience is often out of joint. Therefore he that is the Artificer muſt be a cunning workman, that knoweth how to break the ſtone in the heart by the hammer of the Law: and alſo how to bind up the broken-hearted by the Goſpel without the Law. Where this Artificer is, nouriſhment is conveyed from the head into the body, and every part is ſupplyed, as it were, by joints and bands to the edifying of it ſelf in love: there is nothing done but the framing and faſhioning of Jewels for the Lord, and the preſenting (*as it were*) of a Royal Diadem into the hands of God. Therefore it is ſaid of the holy City the new *Jeruſalem*, that it is all of pure gold, and that it is garniſhed with all manner of pre-

cious Stones: which is the busines of the Jeweller to garnish the City.

Therefore, seeing he is to work in Gold and Silver, and precious Stones, even with the pure Doctrine of the Gospel, seeing he must break in pieces stony hearts, and grind them as it were to powder, and also must set in order poor distressed Consciences, that are altogether out of joint, that they may be armed and fortified against so mighty an enemy as the Devil: he had *need be a cunning workman*, a wise Master builder, that is able so to build as the building may stand.

This is the Artificer spoken of here by the Bridegroom, whose Office is so to Preach the Gospel, that nourishment may be conveyed from the head Christ Jesus, into the Church which is his body: that so from joint to joint, every member may be supplyed, and the whole body may increase with the increasings of God.

Verse

VERSE II.

Thy navel is like a round Goblet, which wanteth not liquor——

THe navel is that whereby ſhe nouriſheth her Children in the Conſcience, which is the womb of the Church. For ſhe is here ſet forth under the ſimilitude of a Child-bearing woman, therefore *ſhe is ſaid by Saint* Paul *to be the Mother of us all, and the Miniſters of the Church to be ſpiritual Fathers.* And in that her *navel is like a round Goblet that is full*, it ſheweth her ſtore of Heavenly proviſion to nouriſh her Children in the womb: and that ſhe is able to teach a right conceaving of Chriſt in the mind and Conſcience. The drift and ſcope of all her teaching is, how to unbottom the Soul from it ſelf, and to graft it into the Lord Jeſus Chriſt by faith: that ſo being delivered out of Priſon, and ſet in liberty and freedom, it may joyfully walk in the practice of all good works. And in this ſhe differeth from the Mother-in-Law, or Bondwoman, who although ſhe teacheth alſo a neceſſity of Holineſs, calling it the one thing needful, which all muſt have or elſe be damned, yet ſhe teacheth no other way to attain unto it, but only by an earneſt preſſing and requiring of good works, *Gal.* 5. 1.

works, and thereupon she promiseth her Children the assurance of justification and blessedness. She nourisheth not her Children in the womb, but destroyeth the conception; because she teacheth not the true way to attain to that Righteousness and Holiness which is required. For she endeavoureth first to make the fruit good, and then the Tree good: but the true Mother first endeavoureth to make the Tree good, and then the fruit good. This sheweth us the reason, why there are so few Children in the Church of God that come to good, why there is so much teaching and little the near: the reason is because there are so few that are nourish'd in the womb, there are but few that can teach a right conceiving of Christ in the mind and Conscience. Hence it comes to pass, that there are so many that pertain to the Mother-in-Law, that wanteth the Heavenly liquor to nourish her young, and so few that pertain to the true Mother that hath her goblet full. Therefore it comes to pass, that in stead of generating Children unto glory, the glory flyeth away like a Bird, (that is to say, the right understanding of the Gospel) *from the Birth, from the Womb, and from the Conception.*

Hos. 9.11.

Therefore all those that are spiritual Fathers and Mothers in the Church of God, that would come under the Churches commendation in this place, must endeavour to learn the true way of propagating the Gospel into the Conscience, that

that it may be full of Heavenly liquor, where by it may kill the rigour of the Law, and quench the fiery darts of the Devil: then ſhall the Babe be nouriſhed in the womb, otherwiſe *Moſes* ſhall be conceived in ſtead of Chriſt. Learn we therefore this Divine skill, then ſhall the afflicted Conſcience be delivered from the wrath of God; and ſhall learn how to kill ſin in the habit and root, and alſo how to walk before God in newneſs of Spirit.

——Thy belly is like an heap of wheat, ſet about with Lillies.

It is as much as to ſay, thy belly is big with Child, which is ſaid elſe where, *to be a great wonder in Heaven,* in that ſhe being with Child cryed travailing in Birth, and pained to be delivered. Now to be in pain, to travail and to cry, is to be under the apprehenſion of ſin and the Law with all its effects: In which hour of tribulation, the Church is in much pain, and cryeth for deliverance, that is, to God for help and ſuccour, and ſticketh to him by faith, perſwading her ſelf that Chriſt hath a fellow feeling of all her miſeries, and is nearly touched with the ſame. When after this manner faith worketh againſt the tribulations which we feel, and our hearts begin to be warmed with the ſame: then is our deliverance come, then do we rejoyce like a woman that is delivered of her

Rev. 12.

her Child, *for joy that a man is born into the world*, that is, *for joy that Christ is born in the Conscience.*

Now her belly is not only big, but is also likened to an heap of Wheat, because by the Preaching of the Cross she bringeth forth Christ into the world, who is the bread of life, and giveth life to the world. And is set about with Lillies, because all the Lillies of Christ do feed upon Christ, who is the living bread which came down from Heaven: and also upon that living water which floweth out of the *belly of the Spouse*, according to Christs own words, Joh. 7. *he that believeth in me, out of his belly shall flow Rivers of water of life.*

This must teach us what to do when we are hungry, even to seek after the living bread, which being the bread of life, will feed us and fill us, with Everlasting comfort. Now that we may taste of the bread, we must first find the heap of Wheat, which lyeth hid in the Churches belly, which we may easily do, if we observe where the Lillies be, for there is the heap where the Lillies are set about. Mark we then where the Lillies grow, and where they are cloathed and arrayed, and made so glorious, for there is the heap of Wheat, there is the living bread that came down from Heaven, and giveth life unto the World, and also the living water, which whosoever drinketh thereof, shall live for ever, and never be more a thirst.

Thy

VERSE IV.

Thy neck is as a Tower of Ivory——

THe breaſts are ſpoken of in *Song* 4. & 5. By the neck underſtand ſtrength, as alſo in *Song* 4th, which ſtrength of the Church lyeth in her faith. And is likened to a Tower or Throne of Ivory, which is likely to be the Throne of Ivory which King *Solomon* made to ſit in Judgment to Judg the people. For the King made a porch for the Throne where he might Judg, which was call'd the porch of Judgment. So that *Solomon* in his Throne did not ſit to be Judged, but to Judg. 2 *Cor.* 9. 17. 1 *King.* 7. 7

Now in that Faith is like the Throne wherein King *Solomon* ſate to Judg, it ſheweth that a Chriſtian man is in reſpect of his faith, a Lord and Judg of all, and ſervant to none. He ought not to obey or give place to any, contrary to the rules of his faith: For King *Solomon* was to Judg and to determin, and not to give place. Therefore, the judgment of faith muſt conclude and determin all things, (*it being the judgment of God, Chriſt, and the holy Ghoſt*) and not a tittle of it muſt be diminiſhed. A man muſt rather ſuffer his life to be taken from him than the glory of God to be loſt. Saint *Paul* in a point of faith when the truth of the Goſpel was *Charity hath no place in matters of the firſt Table: but God and his word muſt only be ſtuck unto.*

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was brought in Question, would not give place to the false brethren, no not for an hour.

Gal. 2. 5. Therefore no man must think, when he heareth the righteousness of the Law to be preferr'd above the righteousness of faith, that he may sit still and be silent, as though all were well: for that is not to Judg, but to suffer the Gospel to be lost.

In matters of the second Table Charity hath the preheminency.

In matters of the second Table, a man is to be a servant to all, there Charity must have the preheminence above faith: there faith must suffer it self to give place to Charity, it must submit, become pliant and patient towards all, not requiring himself to be counted for a rule, whereunto all men must submit, but to think modestly of himself: to permit, to take in good part, to obey, to give place, to do and suffer all things, as he shall see it profitable for the winning of his Neighbour to the Gospel.

1 *Cor.* 11. 19. An example hereof see in St. *Paul*, *who although he was free from all men* (*being a Lord and Judg in respect of his faith*) *yet he made himself a servant to all, in respect of his Charity.* To the *Jews* he became as a *Jew*, to them that were under the Law, as under the Law, that he might gain them to the faith: to them that were without Law, as without Law, that he might win them to Christ. For this I do (*saith he*) for the Gospels sake. But when the matter in Question is concerning Everlasting Salvation, or Everlasting Damnation, a man is to be so certain of his faith, and the

Note from hence the temper of St. Paul's Spirit, towards those of whom he had any hopes, and what his carriage was to win them to Christ.

founda-

foundation upon which he buildeth, that he is to give place to none, he is not to be in ſubjection for an hour. Then is the neck under the commendation here, of King *Solomons* Tower, or Throne of Jvory. The next thing commended are the Eyes of the Church.

——*Thine eyes are like the Fiſh-pools in Heſhbon, by the gates of Beth-rabbim:*——

Heſhbon was a City where *Sihon* King of the *Amorites* ſometime dwelt. The fiſh-pools in *Heſhbon* were certain ponds where fiſh were wont to breed, without which fiſh-pools the fry could not be preſerved. *The gates of Beth-rabbim*, were in a certain place (*as is probable*) near unto the Kings fiſh-pools, and alſo the way unto the fiſh-pools: and frequented by many that did deſire to ſee the pools, or to have any taſt of the Kings fiſh. So that if any one did deſire to fiſh there, or to taſt of the fiſh that were bred in thoſe pools: he muſt come in by *the gates of Bethrabbim.* Num. 21. 26.

The meaning of the ſimilitude I conceive to be this. The fiſh-pools are the waters of life, the fiſh that are bred in thoſe pools are men, the Fiſhers in thoſe pools are the Miniſters of the Goſpel, *called by our Saviour Fiſhers of men: Heſhbon* being a City of the *Amorites*, where the Law was not given, ſignifieth the free-

free-mother, which is barren in the account of the world, but gendereth many Children unto God. The eyes which are like these fish-pools, are the eyes of the understanding, which being enlightned in the knowledg of the Gospel, and how to apply it, do breed many a good fish. *By the gates of Bethrabbim*, or way to the fish-pools, understand the new and living way to the waters of life: which being rightly opened, the fish-pools are well stored with many a good fish, but if not, few fish shall come into the Net, and the fish-pools shall be but of little use.

This matter is plainly expressed in the prophecy of *Ezekiel*, where the waters of the Sanctuary are said to go down into the desert, and that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the river shall come, shall live. And that there shall be a very great multitude of fish because these waters shall come thither. From whence it is plain, that seeing the waters of the Sanctuary run down into the desert, that the fish-pool is not made in the fruitful, but in the barren and Solitary place; which must comfort every poor dejected Soul that is sensible of his own barrenness, and encourage him to drink of the living water that he may live for ever. For thither the River shall run, and there the fish shall breed, and increase to a multitude, by reason of the coming of the waters. Let every one then that feeleth his misery, rejoyce and be glad, and clap his hands

Ezc.47.8. 9.

hands for joy, and not be an enemy to himſelf in ſtopping up the paſſage of the River, and in ſtriving to turn it over the fruitful Land, where it can never run, but let him drink ſweetly of the Heavenly fiſh-pool, then ſhall his eyes be like the fiſh-pools in *Heſhbon*, where the fry ſhall be preſerved, and the ponds ſtored.

Alſo this teacheth all thoſe that are fiſhers, that intend to caſt in their Nets, ſo as to catch men, to learn rightly to open the gates of *Bathrabbim*, the new and living way to life; which cannot be done, unleſs they go to Chriſt for the key, who giveth the ſame, to thoſe whom he intendeth ſhall be fiſhers of men. Where thoſe gates are not opened, the way to the fiſh-pools can never be found.

Some poure the waters of life into the fruitful Soil only, which is, not only to ſhut themſelves out of the Kingdom of Heaven, but alſo others. For all their labour is to make men holy by the Law: which is but to leave them under the curſe and condemnation of the Law. Theſe inſtead of preſerving the full fry of fiſh, do dam up the pools, and where there are no fiſh-pools there can be no fiſh, and where there be no fiſh bred, all the labour in making the ponds is utterly loſt. So that for want of a right bait for the fiſh to nibble at, thoſe that in likelyhood might have bred good fiſh, do in the end decay and come to nothing.

And as the way to the fish-pools must be open'd, so the right time must be observed when to cast in the Net, which must not be until Christ calleth: Some run before they are sent, *these fish all night with the disciples, but* Joh. 21. *catch nothing; but when Christ bid them cast in their Nets, they caught a multitude of fish.* When Christ committed the uncircumcision to *Paul*, and the circumcision to *Peter*, a mighty work was wrought by them: but when men run before they are call'd, all their labour in fishing is lost.

Others there are that are able fishers, but they forsake their own fish-pools, where Christ bids them fish, and run to other ponds, and cast in their Nets for another sort of fish: these are like *Jonah*, who when God sent him to *Nineveh*, ran to *Tarshish*, and what followed this? Because he refused to fish where God sent him, therefore God provided a fish at length *to catch him and swallow him up.* To conclude all, let all men that are Ministers in the Church of God, endeavour in the fear of Gods name, to be so well enlightned in the knowledg of the Gospel: that they may rightly perform their Office, then shall they be see-ers indeed, and come under this commendation in the Text, thine eyes are like the fish-pools in *Heshbon.*

———*Thy*

—*Thy noſe is as the Tower of Lebanon, looking towards Damaſcus.*

The noſe is the inſtrument of ſmelling, which by reaſon of its loftineſs againſt her ſpiritual Enemies, (*for which cauſe this expreſſion is often uſed*) is likened to the Tower of *Lebanon* which *Solomon* Built. Which Tower is call'd the House of the Forreſt of *Lebanon*, *which House he furniſh'd with Targets and Shields to make it ſtrong againſt the Enemy: and it was ſet upon Cedar Pillars, and there was light againſt light, in the rows of Pillars, which* (as 'tis probable) *were to give light towards Damaſcus: which was the chief City in Syria, as Eſai ſheweth, the head of Syria is Damaſcus, which people were always Enemies to the Children of Iſrael.* 1 *Kin.* 7. 2. 1 *Kin.* 10. 17. *Eſa.* 7.

Now at thoſe lights the watchmen might perceive what Enemies were at any time coming againſt the people of *Iſrael.*

Now in that the noſe of the Church is likened to this goodly Tower, it ſheweth the courage and alſo care of the Bride, for the preſervation of her ſelf, and all her Children againſt her Spiritual Enemies. It ſmelleth before-hand the ſubtilties of *Satan*, and armeth her ſelf accordingly.

She is not much daunted by thoſe that live in *Damaſcus*, but hath a kind of holy pride againſt all her adverſaries: and when ſhe is at

the worſt, yet then ſhe ſcenteth that mercy and deliverance which is prepared for her by the Goſpel.

Verse V.

Thine Head upon thee is like Carmel; and the hair of thine Head like purple:——

1 *Kin.* 18. 9. *Carmel* was a Mountain whither *Eliah* (by Commandment from the King) *ſent for the falſe Prophets and ſlew them; the Prophets of Baal were four Hundred, and the Prophets of the Groves four Hundred and fifty.* And it was to this end and purpoſe, that the people might be convicted concerning the knowledg and worſhip of the true God: where an Altar was to be Built, and Sacrifices provided, but no Fire put under, and the God that anſwered by Fire, was to be acknowledged for the true God, which was anſwered by the conſuming of *Eliahs* Sacrifice. Therefore *Eliah* brought the falſe Prophets down to the brook *Ciſhon* and ſlew them there.

Alſo *Carmel* was a place where *Nabal* did *Sam.* 25. 2. inhabite, which place was very fruitful, and *Eſa.* 33. 9. is oftentimes ſpoken of in Scripture by way *Eſa.* 35. of excellency for fruitfulneſs. Now in that the

the Churches head is likened to *Carmel*, it ſheweth that as ſhe is fruitful in faith and all good works: ſo alſo in conceiving the right way for the overthrowing the Doctrine of all falſe Prophets, which none can do but only the Bride of Chriſt. For although many ſpend much time about controverſies in Religion, yet for want of ſtating the caſe aright, the only matter in difference, *(many times)* never comes in Queſtion, and all the work remains to be done. The head of ſuch is not like unto *Carmel* the fruitful Mountain: but rather like unto the Mountains of *Gilboa* barren and unfruitful. But herein the Churches head is commended, and the way how ſhe attaineth to this Heavenly skill, is ſet down in the next words.

——*The King is held in the Galleries.* 3

Galleries are certain walks that are often builded by Princes, and great men, into which Galleries they uſe to retire themſelves, when then intend to meditate, or diſcourſe about matters of weight. From which cuſtom I conceive the word Galleries is here borrowed, and the meaning to be this, to ſhew the way that the ſpouſe of Chriſt walketh in inſtating, and handling of controverſies: for the confuting of falſe opinions which is, She holdeth faſt the King in the Galleries. The meaning is, She alloweth of no contention in the Church,

unleſs it be about a matter that concerneth Chriſt her King: If the point in difference ſeem to be ere ſo great, and the contention ever ſo ſharp, yet if it touch not againſt the Goſpel, ſhe medleth not in it: and on the contrary, if it ſeem to be ever ſo ſmall a matter in difference, if it claſheth but in the leaſt title againſt the Goſpel, ſhe then armeth her ſelf by the Goſpel to meet her adverſary in the field.

The Church avoideth vain janglings about the Law and her own ſuppoſed works.

Now herein lyeth the fruitfulneſs of the Churches head in diſcerning this thing, in that ſhe maketh enquiry into the propoſition holden by the contrary party, and the extent of it: whither directly or by conſequent, it daſheth againſt the Kingdom of Chriſt, that ſo ſhe may arm her ſelf accordingly. So that ſhe entereth not in to controverſy unleſs it be to preſerve the Goſpel: neither fighteth ſhe againſt any falſe opinion, with any other weapon, but the Goſpel, and thus ſhe holdeth the King in the Galleries.

The ſame Galleries muſt we alſo walk in, when we meddle with controverſies. No jangling nor quarrelling, *(much leſs ſeperation)* muſt be made about the Law, *foraſmuch as every man is faulty in reſpect of his works*, therefore every man muſt bear, ſubmit, and pray for another; and alſo reprove in love and gentleneſs, thereby to win men *(if poſſible)* to faith in Chriſt: but if any man ſhall hold any Doctrine which either directly or by conſequence, daſheth

Jude 3, 9.

daſheth againſt the Goſpel, no man muſt bear it, but endeavour by the Goſpel to overthrow it. *Jude* 1.

When the Queſtion is not about fundamentals, let every man keep his faith to himſelf, that no diviſion be made in the Church: haſt thou faith have it to thy ſelf before God, otherwiſe there will be no end of diſputing in the Church, but if the matter in Queſtion, be any way againſt faith in Chriſt, then muſt every mans mouth be open. This is to hold the King in the Galleries: which Galleries, if they had been walk'd in for Twenty years paſt, we had not ſeen the days which now we have ſeen. *Rom.* 14. *Every man muſt be ſtrong to defend the Goſpel.*

The falſe Propheteſs walketh in other Galleries in medling with controverſies. She raiſeth contentions, and many vain janglings, not about faith in Chriſt, but about the Law, which ſheweth, that ſhe hath no ſmall opinion of her ſelf, but that ſhe prizeth her own ſinful works, far beyond the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, elſe why doth ſhe ſeparate from Church aſſemblies, accounting all men to be Anti-chriſtian, if they be wanting (*only*) in the works of the Law? There is a mixed multitude, the Miniſter is not rightly called, and many other things are done, or not done which (*as ſhe ſuppoſeth*) are beſides the rule, but what of all this? Somethings were ever wanting in men, and ever will be, ſo long as the Church is on this ſide perfection. *That is about an opinion of her ſuppoſed works, which becauſe ſhe prizeth ſo high, therefore they are naught.*

Now becauſe ſhe forſaketh the Church only for her blemiſhes, not becauſe faith is not Preached, but in that works are wanting: therefore ſhe holdeth not the King in the Galleries, but preferreth *Moſes* before Chriſt. And what follows all, but only this becauſe ſhe prizeth the ſinful works of men, far beyond the gifts of God, and righteouſneſs of Chriſt: therefore ſhe condemneth the Goſpel, and is condemned by the Goſpel. According to the ſaying of our Saviour, he that believeth not is condemned already.

This way muſt we alſo walk in, in pacifying and quieting the afflicted Conſciences, even to hold the King in the Galleries: For if when the Conſcience is in diſtreſs, the Law be then acknowledged to be the Lord, then ſhall it be ſhut up faſt in priſon and bondage, then ſhall it be held under the Law, whereby it is accuſed and condemned, this is to hold *Moſes* in the Galleries, not the King.

Therefore *Moſes* the ſervant, muſt be caſt out of the afflicted Conſcience, by faith in Chriſt: and not ſuffered to lodge in the Chamber with his Lord. Let us learn therefore to behold by faith, *Moſes* with his Sepulchre to be vaniſh'd away in reſpect of the Conſcience: that Chriſt with his Righteouſneſs may rule and reign. Thus muſt we hold faſt Chriſt our King: againſt all Enemies without and within.

Now

Now in that the Churches hair is commended, it meaneth believers, (*as is ſhewed elſewhere*) and by purple their clothing, ſhewing that all thoſe that are fruitful in this Divine and Heavenly Art, are clothed in purple, (*even with the Righteouſneſs of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*) which is a Princely Robe. For they are thoſe that do overcome by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of his Teſtimony.

VERSE VI.

How fair, and pleaſant art thou, O love, for delights!

THis is a paſhionate ſpeech of Chriſt, being (*as it were*) overcome with the delights of his Church, in excerciſing her ſelf in the points aforeſaid. Therefore he pronounceth *her fair and pleaſant*, with admiration.

Verse VII.

This thy Statute is like unto a Palm-tree, and thy breasts like clusters.

CHrist having before commended his spouse in respect of the parts and features of the body, under divers and sundry similitudes: here he setteth forth her full growth under the similitude of the *Palm tree*, concerning which Tree there are divers things written by Historians.

As first, that they grow in Couples, Male and Female, and are full of seed, but the Female is only fruitful, yet not except growing by the Male. And also, that it is of this nature, that although never so huge and pondrous a waight be put upon it, yet never to yield to the burden, but still to resist the Heavinesse thereof: and to endeavour the more to lift and raise it self upward.

Now the Stature of the Bride being likened to the *Palm-tree*, it sheweth what the nature of faith is in all the godly; even to lift it self upwards, in the midd'st of the greatest fears and perplexities, and notwithstanding all burdens and waights yet still to grow through them all. Therefore in *Rev.* 7. 9. Those that had gotten the victory over *Satan* and the world by faith

faith in Chriſt, appeared in *white Robes and Palm-branches in their hands, as tokens of joy and victory.*

And this is alſo promiſed in the *Pſalms, that the Righteous ſhall flouriſh like a Palm-tree.* *Pſal.* 92. 12. There is no doubt but every Chriſtian ſhall be put to the tryal, by having a heavy weight layed upon him at ſome time or other in his life: which weight according to the fleſh and reaſon, ſhall ſeem to preſs him down to the very ground, ſo that in appearance he ſhall never be able to grow upright again. Therefore we find, that in the deſcription of the Temple, there were round about the Houſe figures of *Cherubims* and *Palm-trees*, where a *Palm-tree* was between a *Cherub* and a *Cherub*: and every *Cherubim* had two faces, the face of a man, and the face of a Lion, the face of a man was towards the *Palm-tree* on the one ſide, and the face of a Lion towards the *Palm-tree* on the other ſide. *Eze.* 41. 18.

This face of a Lion is doubtleſs *Satan*, who hath his face always towards the *Palm-tree*, uſing all means to cruſh it down, by caſting heavy weights and burdens upon it: but the face of a man, is the loving countenance of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt clothed in our humanity, which always looks upon us to comfort and ſtrengthen us, againſt all the aſſaults and Temptations of the Devil.

There-

Therefore in such conditions we must live by faith, and pray without ceasing, for as it is sure and certain that the face of our Lord Jesus Christ, is towards us upon the one side, by whose loving countenance we shall be sure of the Victory.

So is it also as certain, that the face of the Lion is upon us on the other side, even *Satan* the roaring Lion that waiteth continually to devour us.

Therefore must we continually watch and pray, and look unto Christ by faith, for (*as was said before*) the *Palm-tree* groweth not to be fruitful except it grow by the Male: therefore let us hold fast our head and Husband the Lord Jesus Christ, that we may be fruitful to Eternal life.

Then shall the breasts of consolation be full, *like clusters*, which when we have the true use thereof, shall wonderfully comfort and strengthen us, against all the heavy weights and burdens that *Satan* shall cast upon us.

VERSE VIII.

I ſaid, I will go up to the Palm-tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof: now alſo thy breaſts ſhall be as cluſters of the Vine, and the ſmell of thy Noſe like Apples.

THe *Palm-tree* as was ſaid before, is the Church, and the boughs are the Children of the Church.

Now here it is ſhewed how they grow to be ſo fruitful, it is becauſe Chriſt taketh hold firſt, therefore the breaſts are full of the Wine of conſolation, and the noſe ſmelleth variety of fruit in the word of God. The ſum of theſe words is this.

That the principal means for the Children of the Church to be fill'd with variety of excellent fruits, is to ſuffer the Lord Jeſus Chriſt to take hold of them firſt. To ſuffer him to begin and to perfect his own work, by his own means, and in his own way.

And the reaſon is, becauſe God hath decreed that all men that ſhall ever be made holy and fruitful, ſhall have it his way. Therefore Chriſt ſays here, *I ſaid, I will take hold, and my word ſhall ſtand.* Therefore the *Palm-tree* and all his branches ſhall be made fruitful his way, or not at all.

Which

Which ſheweth us the reaſon, why there is ſo much unfruitfulneſs amongſt the Children of the Church, why men remain ſo blind in their underſtandings, ſo perverſe in their wills and affections, and grow to ſo little ſtature in Chriſtianity: the reaſon is, becauſe they will not ſuffer the Lord Chriſt Jeſus to begin with them firſt, to take hold and begin his own work in his own way. Nothing will ſerve the turn, unleſs they themſelves begin firſt, unleſs they can bring ſomething of their own whereby to deſerve his favour.

Hence it comes to paſs, that in ſtead of being fill'd with Cluſters of the Vine which yield the Wine of Conſolation, and of ſcenting that variety of fruit, which groweth in the Orchard of the Lord: they bring forth ſoure grapes, wild fruits, ſuch as are fit for nothing but to be caſt away.

From this ground alſo it comes to paſs, that ſo many forſake the Church of God, and run ſome to one Sect, and ſome to another until they have quite loſt themſelves and run to nothing; the reaſon is becauſe they will not ſuffer Chriſt to begin, but they themſelves muſt take hold firſt: therefore they forſake the way where he begins, the dore by which he enters, the gate by which he openeth Everlaſting life to Men; and every man chooſeth, his own way, his own work, his own rule, hoping thereby to pleaſe God, ſo as to receive ſomething from him as large as life Eternal.

And

And from hence alſo proceeds another evil, which is, that when great croſſes and tribulations come, which is the way by which God doth uſe to govern his Church: no man will give him ſo much honour as to confeſs that it is the Lord that taketh hold upon him, but inſtead thereof we fall to quarrelling, and contending, with ſecond cauſes, with thoſe inſtruments by which God doth afflict us and govern us; and in ſo doing we quarrel and contend againſt the Lord.

So that when God provides the croſs on purpoſe, to humble us and drive us into the exerciſe of our faith, that we might learn experimentally to know him to be our God, in creating ways and means for our deliverance, which we never underſtood: we will by no means ſuffer him to begin with us, or lay hold on us, we humble not our ſelves before him, ſeek not, nor ſubmit unto him, but rather ſeek how to revenge our ſelves upon him. Therefore it is juſt with the Lord (*ſeeing we will not ſuffer him to take hold upon us, to enter within us, and open Everlaſting life unto us*) that when death, judgment, the Law, Conſcience, the Devil, and Hell, do begin to ſtare in our faces, that we ſhould be forſaken of him and left, in a moſt deſperate and ſad condition.

Therefore let us ſuffer Chriſt to go up to the *Palm-tree and take hold of the boughs thereof:* which he firſt doth viſibly, when we are Baptized

Baptized in his name. Secondly, invisibly, when he giveth us the Holy Ghost, who teacheth us to understand our Baptism: which leadeth us to submit to the condemnation of the Law, which is justly due unto us, and to fly to Christ by faith, and walk in newness of Spirit. But if we put a false construction upon our Baptism, and think that Christ doth not begin with us, and own us thereby: we then suffer him not to take hold on the boughs, but forsake the visible foundation of our faith.

Baptism is like the Pillar of Stone, between *Laban* and *Jacob*, which was a witness between them, that neither of them must pass beyond that pillar towards the other for hurt.

Therefore it witnesseth unto us, that God beareth us no grudg, which witness he cannot deny, if we stick unto it by faith: then shall we love, fear, and obey him, and flourish like the *Palm-tree*; but if we forsake his witness, and break Covenant with him, then will God be constrained to enter into judgment with us, then shall we never feel the comfort of the breast, the wine of consolation, neither shall our nose ever smell that variety of excellent fruit, which otherwise we might have found in the word of God.

VERSE IX.

And the roof of thy mouth like the beſt Wine, for my beloved, that goeth down ſweetly, cauſing the lips of thoſe that are aſleep, to ſpeak.

THis is another effect that follows, from the underſtanding of the former point, it cauſeth the *roof of the mouth or palate to be like the beſt wine.* There is a twofold uſe of the palate, which is to taſt meat for ones own uſe, and it is alſo the inſtrument of ſpeech: both which are here meant.

For firſt of all, as ſoon as the underſtanding is rightly enlightned in the way how the *Palm-tree* grows ſo ſtrong and tall: the palate can taſt, nor reliſh no other wine, that is, it cannot endure the preſcribing of any other way to faith and Holineſs, but by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt. Thoſe that preſcribe any other way, never taſted one cup of the beſt Wine.

This is that which Chriſt ſaith, *goeth down ſweetly*, and that it is for his beloved: it is not for ſtrangers to taſt of, but the family of God, that are willing to hear and underſtand the way to the Tree of life.

Such cannot endure to ſpend money for that which is not bread, to have that dreſſed and ſet upon the Table which will not ſatisfy; but are only delighted with the Wine that is provided at wiſdoms feaſt.

This is the firſt uſe of the palate. And the next is, it is the inſtrument of ſpeech, which cauſeth an utterance of things Divine. For when once the *roof of the mouth* hath taſted the Wine of conſolation for its own uſe, it communicates the ſame alſo unto others, which *goeth down ſweetly*, as ſoon as the goodneſs of it is once known: and alſo cauſeth the lips of thoſe that are *aſleep to ſpeak*. That even as Wine maketh men Talkative, ſo doth this Heavenly liquor of conſolation, cauſe thoſe that drink well thereof: to utter forth the ſecret and wonderful Miſteries of God.

Now from what hath been ſpoken by the Bridegroom, in this Chapter in the commendation of the Bride; ſhe learneth to make application of his love, as appears in the following words.

Verse

VERSE X.

I am my beloveds, and his deſire is toward me.

IN which words are ſet down the Concluſion the Bride maketh from the commendation of her beloved mentioned before. Which concluſion is this. *I am my beloveds.* And the cauſe of her yielding her ſelf thus unto him is, from the confidence ſhe hath of his affection to her, which is ſet down in the words next following, *his deſire is towards me.*

But how commeth the Church to this confidence?

I anſwer, by the word of God, for being Baptized in his name, and in learning the uſe of her Baptiſm: She perceiveth by faith that her perſon is accepted, and this confidence muſt we all learn to have in Chriſt, even that his deſire is to us, and his heart upon us.

Now this is a wonderful thing, that the deſire of the ſon of God, ſhould be after a poor miſerable ſinner that is his Enemy: yet this is the truth ſhe here believeth, and it is alſo written for us that we might believe.

The Church perceiving Christ to peep after her who is despised in her own eyes: and commend her so much. yieldeth her self wholy unto him, and so the match is made between Christ and the Soul.

For mark it, in all the foregoing Verses in this Chapter, Christ setteth forth the beauty of her person, by which she findeth his desire is after her: for which very reason she yieldeth her self to him and says, *I am my beloveds*, and so the match is made. From all which we see this clear.

That the main matter, which makes up the match, and knits the knot, *between Christ and the Soul:* is when we find by the word of God that Christ is willing to take us with nothing, and that we are willing to cast our selves upon him on the same terms.

And the reason is, because nothing else is required in our Marriage with Christ, but a consent of both parties: which consent there is not until we agree upon terms.

Which informeth us in the Reason, why there are so few that are married to Christ, and so many to Antichrist, the reason is, because they agree not upon terms. Christ useth all art and skill, that is possible for a lover to use, to draw people to himself: and bringeth the matter so near to ones view, that a man would imagine the contract were made, yet let the case be but rightly stated, and the propositions on both sides rightly look'd into: and a man shall find as much difference in the terms, as there is between light and darkness. The terms upon Christs side being to take us with nothing, or not at all: but the terms on the

the other ſide, are to bring a ſufficient portion, or elſe not to marry as yet. This is a deſpiſing to marry with Chriſt who is raiſed from the dead to deliver us from our ſins: and to live in Captivity under our firſt husband the Law, and to die for ever in our ſins.

We muſt therefore learn, to ſubmit our ſelves to Chriſt and to yield to his own terms. Chriſt will not be brought to our terms. Our terms are to bring a portion with us, but Chriſt ſays all that we have is worth nothing: which difference is very great.

Therefore he requireth nothing of us, but that we ſtedfaſtly believe and confeſs this one thing, that although we are condemned by the Law, being poor miſerable and wretched Sinners: yet that his deſire is towards us. Therefore muſt we learn to confeſs our ſins before him with confidence that he will forgive us; and with the Bride to believe, that his deſire is towards me, that he came down from Heaven for me, and ſatisfied the wrath of God for me.

Thus muſt we with the Bride, firſt endeavour to find, that we are objects of Chriſts deſire, and next of all, to confeſs, by our conſenting to his choiſe, that we are his: then ſhall we not only attain, to true Righteouſneſs and bleſſedneſs but alſo to an aſſurance of the ſame.

Verse XI.

Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field, let us lodge in the Villages.

THe Church being eſpouſed to Chriſt, through the great affection of her beloved, and alſo having found the new and living way how to attain this Heavenly knowledge, to be aſſured thereof: deſireth (*after the manner of one that is eſpouſed or contracted in marriage*) to go forth into the Fields, that her beloved may be known. By which ſhe meaneth Gods Fields, where Gods Husbandry and his tillage is, and alſo where the true and living way to life, is not yet rightly underſtood: thither ſhe deſireth to go with her beloved, therefore ſhe ſays, let us lodge there, by which ſhe meaneth her Doctrine, that the Husbandry of God may go forward, and that Chriſt may come to ſome more eſteem amongſt them.

And by Villages ſhe meaneth, ſuch as where Chriſt and his Apoſtles *went up and down Preaching the Goſpel.* By which we ſee, that the Churches care is not only to receive the Goſpel, but alſo to plant the Goſpel, and this ſhe cannot do without her beloved; therefore ſhe taketh

taketh Chriſt with her. Thoſe that go forth into the Vineyard without the Beloved may compel men to labour and toil, to bear the burden and heat of the day: but they can never gather a ſheaf into Gods barn.

And this muſt be the care of every one in his place, to go forth with Chriſt into the Fields, and help to ſet forwards the Husbandry of God, that a good foundation may be laid for harveſt: to lodge his Doctrine in the Villages, that ſo the ſeeds of Eternal life being ſown in the minds of men, there may be hopes of a joyful crop.

There muſt not be only plowing in Gods field, but alſo ſowing. For how can any man expect a crop at harveſt, if he ſhall only Plow, and break the clods, and make plain the face of the Earth, if he never ſow the ſeed? Now the ſower is the ſon of man, not *Moſes*, but Chriſt. Which ploweth up the fallow ground of the heart by the condemning power of the Law: and then it ſoweth the immortal ſeed of the word into the diſtreſſed mind.

Moſes neither ſoweth the ſeed, nor yet ploweth up the fallow ground: but only commandeth it to grow, and if it proſper, promiſeth a goodly Harveſt. Thoſe that pertain to the Kingdom of *Moſes*, do require the works of the Law to be done; and then promiſe Eternal life to the doers, but touch it not with the leaſt of their fingers. Theſe plant nothing in

Moſes ſaith do it and live, but break it and die: which neither ploweth nor ſoweth: therefore

without Christ Moses is a destroyer: because the promise being made to doing.

Gods field but (*only that which which was there before they nourish*) an opinion of themselves; which nothing changeth the nature of the ground, which is a most miserable evil, and marreth all good Husbandry in the Church of God.

all men naturally think to obtain it that way; But Christ saith thou hast sinned and art deprived of the glory of God: and calleth us to believe the same, and to fly to himself by faith and confession.

Therefore *Moses* without a Mediator serveth not, but only to bridle the outward man and to keep it in fear: but in the hand of a Mediator, that is to say Christ, is of rare an Excellent use, First to reveal sin to the Conscience that it may be driven to Christ: next it openeth a light unto us to teach us how to serve in newness of Spirit, and not in the oldness of the Letter.

VERSE

VERSE XII.

Let us get up early to the Vineyards, let us ſee if the Vine flouriſh, whether the tender grapes appear, and the Pomegranates bud forth: there will I give thee my loves.

THis Verſe ſetteth forth the care and diligence of the Church in looking to thoſe that were planted in it. Where by Vineyards ſhe meaneth, thoſe particular congregations where the word is taught. *And by the Vine Chriſt.* *And by the tender grape, the Conſcience made tender by the word of God.* And by the budding of the *Pomegranate*, the growth of the Church in Heavenly Doctrine, and in ſhewing forth all good works before men. And in that ſhe ſays, *let us go up early to the Vineyards*, it meaneth before falſe Teachers creep in and ſpoil the fruit. For as ſoon as the Fox cometh he falleth upon the Vine, he endeavoureth to ſpoil Chriſt of his name and glory.

Eſa. 1.

Joh. 15.

Therefore to prevent this, ſhe ſaith, *let us get up to the Vineyards*, meaning the principal members in the Church, both in the Magiſtracy and Miniſtry: whoſe care ought to be, that the Church be rightly inſtructed in ſound Doctrine, and that order be taken with thoſe that

that are perverters of the Goſpel. There ſhe ſaith, *I will give thee my loves*, that is, in ſo doing, I will teſtify my loves unto thee; meaning to Chriſt: She ſpeaketh in the plural number, becauſe it is more then a bare ſingle love, it being not only to Chriſt, but alſo to his Members. The ſum of all is this.

That it is a very great Teſtimony of love to God, and a principal means in cauſing the Lords Vineyard to become fruitful, when an early care is taken, by the principal Members in the Church; that the word be purely taught, and that the mouths of falſe Teachers be ſtopped.

If the word be not rightly taught, no man's Conſcience can be edified: if the mouths of ſeducers be not ſhut *Satan* will quickly pervert the Goſpel of Chriſt. Either of theſe wants hindereth the fruitfulneſs of the Vineyard; and in a manner layeth it waſt. Such therefore muſt be charged by *Timothy*, that they Preach no other Doctrine: or elſe by *Titus* their mouths muſt be ſtopped.

Want of care in this thing betimes, ſpoileth the flouriſhing of the Vine, *the budding of the Pomegranate:* neither doth the tender grape hardly every appear.

Care therefore muſt be taken in this, that no perſon be ſuffered in the *Vineyard*, that is a Seducer: nor ſet to work in the *Vineyard*, unleſs

unleſs *he be a cunning Artificer*, a man of skill, that is able to ſuccour the tender grape, and to refreſh the *Pomegranate*, that his buds may ſhoot forth and appear.

This is a work highly acceptable to the Father, who is the great Husbandman, and to the ſon who is the Archbiſhop of his Church; and therefore I humble conceive it ought to be the care of every Biſhop.

If any man offend in his life, the Magiſtrate is to puniſh him, but if any man go about to pervert the Goſpel: *Paul* and *Barnabas* muſt go up to *Jeruſalem* about the Queſtion, where ſhould always be ſome that are able to hear and determin the ſame.

Whatſoever care is taken, or ought to be taken, about matters of Diſcipline, yet, it is moſt certain, that the main, and principal thing to be cared for, and looked after, is matter of Doctrine: that mens Conſciences be rightly inſtructed, otherwiſe no man can be ſaved.

What miſery is come upon us, for many years paſt, for want of this care, we have ſeen by woful experience.

VERSE

Verse XIII.

The Mandrakes give a ſmell, at our gates are all manner of pleaſant fruits, both new and old, which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved!

These are the words of Chriſt, which are of the nature of a promiſe to ſupply his Church with the variety of all pleaſant fruits.

And firſt of all, he ſpeaketh of the ſweetneſs of the *Mandrakes*, of which we read in *Gen.* 30. 14. which were found by *Reuben* in the time of Wheat Harveſt.

All that I gather from it is this. *Reuben* was the firſt born ſon of *Jacob*: which firſt born ſon was a type of Chriſt, the firſt born among many brethren.

Now the *Mandrakes* being brought by *Reuben* to his Mother *Leah*, (*which were very delightful as it appears by Rachel*) it ſheweth unto us the Excellency of the fruits that come to us by Chriſt who is the firſt begotten of the dead: which are the fruits of his Death and Reſurrection, manifeſted by the Preaching of the Goſpel. Which are ſaid to be pleaſant Fruits,

Fruits, meaning to the tender afflicted Conſcience.

The time when they appear ſo pleaſant is, when the gates are opened: when the Goſpel of Eternal life is opened and rightly applyed to the tender Conſcience. Theſe Fruits are ſaid to be *New and Old*, not in reſpect of ſubſtance of Doctrine, but the variety.

And it being ſaid, *which I have laid up for thee my beloved*, it ſheweth, that all the ſecret Miſteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, that have been hid from ages: are laid up on purpoſe by Chriſt himſelf, to beſtow upon thoſe that put an high eſtimation upon them. And this I conceive to be the meaning of the words. *Note.*

And the Reaſon why they are laid up only for ſuch is, becauſe the Miſteries of the Kingdom of Heaven are of an Infinit value, therefore muſt not be beſtowed upon thoſe that will deſpiſe them: they are of ſo great a price that no man is able to put an eſtimate upon them, they are beyond Silver, Gold, and Rubies, and all things that can be deſired.

Now who can imagine that Jewels of ſuch ineſtimable worth, ſhall be given to ſuch that ſhall only Trample them under ther Feet? Therefore Chriſt hath laid them up *for his beloved:* Even for thoſe that eſteem of them moſt highly, above their appointed food. *Prov.* 3. 15.

Which

Which openeth the cauſe, and ſheweth us the Reaſon, why there are ſo few that are acquainted with the ſecrets of the word of God, that underſtand ſo little of the Miſteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, it is not becauſe Chriſt is not willing to open the Secrets, and reveal the Miſteries, but the reaſon is, becauſe men put no eſtimation upon them.

Chriſt hath laid up all manner of pleaſant Fruits, hath abundance in ſtore to beſtow, of things both *New and Old*, upon all thoſe that are willing to receive them: but no man cares for the taſte of them.

The Mandrakes give a moſt Excellent ſmell: but no man careth for the ſcent. At wiſdoms gates *are all manner of pleaſants Fruits*, even thoſe that heal the Nations, that ſave us from the Everlaſting wrath of God: but we value them not, we look not after them, but ſet an higher eſtimation upon Tranſitory things that periſh, then upon thoſe Everlaſting things, that ſhall never decay.

Juſt like unto Children, that more eſteem of a Counter of little or no value at all; than of a rich Jewel that is of great price.

Therefore no man muſt blame the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but only himſelf, if he ſhould one day ſee, many to come from the Eaſt and Weſt, and ſit down with *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, in the Kingdom of the Father; and he himſelf to be thruſt out.

If

If he ſhould at the laſt day, for deſpiſing of the Goſpel, be ſeparated from the preſence of the Lord (*in whoſe preſence there is fulneſs of joy*) and ſhould be driven to ſuffer the puniſhment of loſs, and the puniſhment of ſenſe for ever: yet I ſay, no man can complain, or once open his mouth againſt the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is willing to beſtow all bleſſings upon men, but they do not value them, nor eſteem them.

All men will put a muſt, and neceſſity upon themſelves in other matters, to riſe early, and to go to bed late, and to eat the bread of carefulneſs: but ſcarce any man counts it a neceſſity to attend at the gates of wiſdom, to ſeek after knowledg, to call and cry for underſtanding, without which every man muſt periſh for evermore.

Learn we then (*before it be too late*) to put an high price upon the things of the Goſpel, then ſhall the Myſtery be opened to us, which is lock'd up and hid from the wicked deſpiſers thereof. Which thing we can never do, unleſs we feel our need of the Goſpel, and the Infinit worth that there is in it to ſerve our neceſſities.

Let us therefore learn to behold, the evil ſcent that our ſins do caſt into the noſtrils of God, that we may be afflicted with the ſame: next, we muſt ſmell to the *Mandrakes*, which are

are brought unto us by the first born. Then shall we find the blessedness that is at wisdoms gates, and begin to tast of the pleasant fruits of Christ death both *New and Old:* which are for all those, and only those that do esteem them, according as Christ says here, *which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved.*

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

VERSE I.

O that thou wert as my brother, that ſucked the breaſts of my Mother, when I ſhould find thee without, I would kiſs thee: yet I ſhould not be deſpiſed.

THE Church hearing from Chriſt the Excellent things that are laid up for her, and only her which eſteemeth of the ſame: wiſheth that all thoſe that live in the ſame Society with her, might partake of the ſame pleaſant Fruits. Therefore ſhe ſays, *O that thou!* meaning a viſible brother unconverted, or the whole company of thoſe that do diſſent from her, in the true principles of faith and good works. *Wert as my brother*, that is, my natural brother in the faith. *That ſucked the breaſts of my Mother:* meaning *Jeruſalem* which is above, the Free mother, and Mother of us all: which the Children of the bond-woman pertain not unto. Theſe words amount

to as much as this, there is a difference between thy Mother, and my Mother: my Mother freely giveth the milk of the Gospel without the works of the Law: thy Mother giveth nothing without, but for the observance of the Law.

Now because she gendereth Children by the Law, therefore thou art not without, but under the Law. *If I could find thee without*, that is to say the Law, or thine own opinion of Righteousness by the Law, *then would I kiss thee*; which meaneth, with the comforts of the Gospel: but because thou dependest upon the Law, thou therefore excludest thy self from the promises of God, and despisest me when I offer the kiss: but if I could find thee without the Law, *then would I kiss thee*, yet I should not be despised.

This sheweth us, that there is a wonderful difference, between people that are born under the same Covenant of promise. The one she says, is my brother that sucked the breasts of my Mother: the other is but as *Abraham* said of his Wife, the Daughter of my Father but not the Daughter of my Mother. For it cannot be denied, but that they are the people of God visibly, to whom the Oracles of God are given: yet that doth not make them Children of Adoption, unless they suck the breasts of the true Mother, whereby they learn the true knowledg and sense of the Scriptures.

There-

Therefore ſhe ſaith, O that thou wert as my brother that ſuck'd! Which ſheweth, that they never yet taſted of the Teat.

The ſame thing muſt we alſo deſire earneſtly and heartily, for our brethren that live with us in the ſame viſible Society which yet are averſe to the faith of Chriſt. That if it be poſſible we might find them without, that ſo they being divorced from their opinion of Righteouſneſs by the Law: we might freely beſtow upon them a kiſs by the Goſpel without being ſcorned, contemned, or deſpiſed.

This alſo ſheweth us clearly what the condition of the Goſpel is, namely, to be without the Law, to be found without our own works and righteouſneſs, for mark it, if I ſhould find thee without, *then would I kiſs thee:* as much as to ſay, then would I, upon this only condition, Adminiſter the the comforts of the Goſpel unto thee. Nothing can be more clear to ſettle us in the ground of our faith, then what is here written.

Therefore when thou art afflicted for thy ſin, and comeſt before God, thou muſt learn to believe in Chriſt, without and againſt the Law: and fully to perſwade thy ſelf, that the Goſpel is thine becauſe thou art without an opinion of the Law.

Then ſhalt thou be enabled and encouraged when thou comeſt before men: to live in the uſe and practiſe of the Law.

Verse II.

I would lead thee, and bring thee into my Mothers houſe, who would inſtruct me, I would cauſe thee to drink of ſpiced wine, of the juyce of my Pomegranate.

THeſe words ſet forth the kindneſs of the Church towards thoſe that are coming on in the faith. *I would lead thee*, that is, if I could find thee without, I would guide thee, and become inſtrumental to bring thee, with Honour and Solemnity. *Into my Mothers houſe*, amongſt the Spiritual people that belong to the Family of God, that are fill'd with Heavenly liquor, and are willing freely to beſtow it: by whoſe acquaintance thy Conſcience ſhould be covered with the voice of joy and gladneſs, for my Mother to whom I would bring thee, *would inſtruct me*. She changeth the perſon here to ſhew the unity that faith maketh amongſt the Saints. *I would cauſe thee to drink of ſpiced wine.* I would cauſe thee

thee by Divine reaſons and arguments, to receive, not only wine (without any thing to compound with it, meaning the Righteouſneſs of a man only) but *I would cauſe thee to drink of ſpiced Wine.* Which is made more Excellent by reaſon of art in mixture: even of the Righteouſneſs of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which being ſpiced and perfumed with the Merit of his Godhead, preſerveth the Conſcience from the wrath of God, and the fear of Eternal death.

This I would cauſe thee to drink of, even by a holy kind of violence and compulſion, that thou ſhouldeſt not forgo it. Which ſhe calleth here *the juyce of her Pomegranate*, becauſe it being freely beſtowed upon the Church by Chriſt himſelf, ſhe alſo freely giveth it, to all that are willing to receive it.

This ſheweth us, what kindneſs thoſe that are ſtrong in the faith, ought to ſhew towards thoſe poor wretches that are newly coming on. Even to take them as it were by the hand, and bring them into *their Mothers houſe*, to bring them acquainted with the Spiritual people, that they may be well inſtructed in the Goſpel, even to thoſe that are fill'd with *ſpiced wine*, that have ſtore *of the juyce of the Pomegranate*, that are able by Divine arguments, and by a holy kind of violence, to faſten the words of Eternal life upon them.

All men muſt be willing, and no man muſt think himſelf too great or too good to ſtoop to help poor dejected creatures this way. Moſt men will be willing to diſcourſe with thoſe that are able and great in the Church that have leaſt need of help: but what ſhall become of poor ſilly creatures that are ignorant? Why ſhould not poor people when they are found without, and much diſtreſſed (in conſideration of their own barreneſs, and by reaſon of the croſs and great tribulations) be ſaluted with the kiſs of the Goſpel, (ſeeing it hath been and is the practiſe of the godly) rather then thoſe that are better able to help themſelves?

The want of this thing ſheweth, that there are but a very few that do live in the right Practice of Piety.

VERSE III.

His left hand ſhould be under my head: and his right hand ſhould embrace me.

THeſe words ſeem to prevent an objection that may be made by a Conſcience in diſtreſs, for when once a man feeleth himſelf under the curſe and in great tribulations, he begins to be afraid, and to cry out for help, What ſhall I do?

To this the Church anſwereth here after the manner of a Lover, *his left hand ſhall be under my head*, meaning his humanity. *And his right hand ſhall embrace me*, meaning his Divinity. She ſpeaketh in the firſt perſon, but the whole company of believers are included: being all one body by faith.

The Church teacheth this Divine and Heavenly art, how to unlade the Conſcience of ſins, burthens, cares and calamities, upon the humanity of Chriſt, who nail'd them all to his croſs, and burried them in his grave; and how to receive the embraces of Chriſt from his Divinity, whereby he conquered all the enemies of man.

After the ſame manner muſt we alſo learn and teach others, even when the Conſcience is in diſtreſs, to unlade it by faith, upon Chriſts humanity: and when we ſtand in need of any help or ſuccour, then by faith to receive it from the Divinity. Then ſhall we by the bleſſings of *his left hand*, be eaſed of our burthens and ſorrows: and by the bleſſings of *his right hand*, ſhall have a ſupply of all our wants from him.

Verse IV.

I charge you, O yee Daughters of Jeruſalem, that yee ſtir not up, nor awake my love, until he pleaſe.

THis charge is given by Chriſt to the Daughters of *Jeruſalem* not to diſturb the Bride, in this her holy faith and confidence, wherein ſhe ſweetly ſleepeth and reſteth ſecure, in the promiſes contrary to reaſon: and not to awake her until *himſelf pleaſe*, which is never.

VERSE V.

Who is this that cometh out of the wilderneſs leaning upon her beloved? ——

THeſe are the continued words of Chriſt, and ſo to the eight Verſe. And it is a Note of admiration at the ſpouſe, in that ſhe leaneth upon Chriſt by faith in all the tribulations that ſhe meeteth with, in the wilderneſs of this world: by which faith ſhe alſo cometh out of them all.

She is not commended, nor admired at, for her Riches, Honour, Proſperity, and eſteem amongſt men: For in the wilderneſs ſhe is commonly without all theſe things, being afflicted with Poverty, Reproach, and all manner of Calamities. Counted as an object, and as the off-ſcowring of all things.

Yet in that ſhe doth not faint and pine away in this Condition, but humbleth and ſubmitteth her ſelf to the croſs, *and leaneth upon her beloved through faith*, ſhe is look't upon with a Note of admiration. *Who is this?* We ſee this then clear.

That at the ſelf ſame time, that the Church is look't upon as an object of reproach, and of no eſteeem by men of the World; ſhe is look't

look't upon with admiration by the Lord Jesus Christ.

In that she is in the Wilderness, where she is afflicted: being without the glory of the World, she is despised of men, but in that she is not offended at her condition, but leaneth upon her beloved by Faith, she is look't upon with admiration by the Lord Jesus Christ. And the reason why she is so much admired is, because she fighteth with the word of God, against all enimies at once: she setteth the Gospel against all oppositions; therefore *Christ says here, Who is this?* She hath not only Enemies without, but also within, she hath the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, yet with one weapon she over-comes them all, and that is Faith in her beloved.

Which consideration must wonderfully comfort all those poor wretches, which are much afflicted by men, that are despised and rejected of the World: who by reason of their blemishes and staines, or poverty, or any outward calamity, (which things are common in the Wilderness) are despised and reproached, and even utterly rejected of the World; yet, (in that they are willing to submit unto the Cross without being offended: to humble themselves and cleave to Christ by Faith) their comfort lies in this, that at the very same time that they are despised of men, they are look't upon with admiration by the Lord Jesus Christ. Which must encourage every man to submit himself to his Heavenly Father,

if

if he pleaſe to exerciſe him in ſuch a condition.

This courſe muſt we alſo take, when the Conſcience accuſeth us, the Law threatneth, and we can apprehend nothing but death Eternal: even then muſt we fall down before him confeſſing our ſins, and hearken to the words of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who at the very ſelf ſame time that we humble our ſelves before him, doth ſpeak good and comfortable words unto us, on purpoſe to draw us to himſelf; therefore muſt we hearken to him and believe his words, then ſhall we not only feed upon the hid *Manna*, that will comfort us in the wilderneſs: but alſo joyfully ſhall come forth of the *wilderneſs leaning upon our beloved.*

——*I raiſed thee up under the apple-tree: there thy Mother brought thee forth, there ſhe brought thee forth that bare thee.*

Theſe words ſhew how this faith and dependance was wrought in the Church. *I raiſed thee up under the Apple-tree.* By the Apple-tree is meant Chriſt himſelf. And it being ſaid under the Apple-tree, it ſheweth, that no man can be raiſed to any degree in the faith, without the fruits of the Tree.

And

And alſo that the fruits of Chriſts death and reſurrection, do naturally and freely drop upon all thoſe that are willing to ſit under the Tree and receive them. By the Mother is here meant the Church, and by her bringing forth, regeneration, which new birth *is under the Apple-tree: for there ſhe brought thee forth that bare thee.*

Now in that he ſays, *I raiſed thee up*, he diſtinguiſheth himſelf from *Moſes* or the Law; not but that Chriſt maketh uſe of the Law in the raiſing up of the Church, but in a different reſpect to thoſe that do not rightly teach the Law.

Chriſt maketh uſe of the Law to humble the ſinner, that it may be driven to Chriſt by faith, to be juſtified without the Law: but the Miniſtry of *Moſes*, promiſeth, juſtification and life to none but thoſe that turn from ſin Morally according to the the Terms of the Law: and herein lies the difference between the true and the falſe handling of the Law, and by this mark only, may we diſcern the voice of Chriſt, from the voice of *Moſes*.

Now *Moſes* caſteth all men down, but raiſeth up no man by his Miniſtry, becauſe he ſetteth them not under the Heavenly Apple-tree, but endeavoureth to raiſe them firſt by other fruit: therefore he maketh the heart of the righteous ſad, whom the Lord hath not made ſad.

But

But Chriſt caſteth down all men by the Law, but raiſeth them up again by his own fruits: even the fruits of the Heavenly Apple-tree. And after this manner doth the true Mother exerciſe all her Children by the Miniſtry.

Firſt, ſhe caſteth them down by a right adminiſtration of *Moſes*: next ſhe raiſeth them up again by Chriſt her Heavenly Apple-tree.

Thus muſt we alſo ſuffer our ſelves, to be hewen down by the Law, that we may be ſtripped of all our glory and boaſting principles: and alſo be willing to receive the fruit that droppeth from Chriſt our Heavenly Apple-tree, that our Conſciences may be healed of the guilt and filth of all our ſins.

VERSE VI.

Set me as a Seal upon thine heart, as a Signet upon thine Arm: for love is ſtrong as death, jealouſie is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a moſt vehement Flame.

THeſe words are not to be underſtood of the Churches ſpeech to Chriſt as ſome imagine; but of Chriſts words to the Church. Wherein

Wherein he plainly inſtructeth her, how her faith and dependance ſhall be continued and ſtrengthned. Which is thus, *ſet me as a ſeal upon thine heart. Me*, Meaning the promiſes of the Goſpel. *As a ſeal*, that they may make an impreſſion, and leave the print of it behind: ſuch an impreſſion that the word may be rooted and grounded in the Soul. *And on thine arm*, meaning the viſible ſign or ſeal, the Goſpel being a double ſeal, the word and Sacraments: and all is to arm and prepare us againſt the evil day.

Then he gives the reaſon, for love is ſtrong as death, by which he meaneth his own love. My love to thee is ſtrong as death, therefore build upon it. For as death is of moſt invincible ſtrength which ſwalloweth up and overcometh all things, ſo ſaith Chriſt is my love to thee. So that the love of Chriſt, manifeſted to us in the Preaching of the Goſpel, being received by faith, ſwalloweth up Death, Hell, the Grave, the Curſe: and briefly, all things elſe whatſoever, that may make us any way miſerable. *But jealouſie is cruel as the Grave*, meaning cruel to the ſpouſe, when through the ſtrength of Temptation ſhe begins to Queſtion the love of Chriſt to her, and grows jealous of the ſame: and can hardly be perſwaded to the contrary, this whereſoever it reigneth is *even as the Grave*, which ſwalloweth up, and putteth an end to all the comforts

ſorts of man. *The coals of it are coals of fire*: Meaning that even as fire where it once catcheth, *hath a moſt vehement Flame*, ſo that if it be not ſuddenly quenched, it burneth up and conſumeth all things: So it is with every dejected Soul, when once it begins to grow jealous of the love of God, and will not have the comforts of the Goſpel to faſten upon it. So grievous a thing is unbelief, that where it is lodged: it burneth up and conſumeth, all true opinions of God, and of his Holy Word.

Therefore, ſeeing our loving Lord Jeſus Chriſt out of his wonderful care and love to us, to ſtrengthen us in our faith, and to preſerve us from this dreadful and bitter Temptation: ſays here, *ſet me as a ſeal upon thine heart*, let us ſuffer the Goſpel to make an impreſſion within us; and look upon it as the decree of Heaven that can never be changed. And ſeeing it muſt be as a Seal alſo upon our arm, let us never leave till we are able to find out the true Myſtery, and meaning in the Sacraments, and to receive it by faith.

And ſeeing his love is ſo ſtrong unto us as death, that putteth an end to all our diſcomforts whatſoever, let us never Queſtion his favour, nor be jealous of his love any more, but let his word ſerve for all; So that although our Sins and Temptations are many, and our afflictions as great as any that are common to man,

man, yet as soon as we humble our selves before him, and call upon him in faith and confidence; let us assure our selves, that he can look upon us no otherwise but as objects of his love, which love he having once set upon us, it continueth for ever, so that no afflictions whatsoever we meet with, must be an argument sufficient to diswade us from believing the same. According as here next followeth.

Verse VII.

Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned.

IT is as much as if Christ had said this, the many afflictions that thou meetest with in this world be they ever so many, and like waters that do overflow, *yet they cannot quench my love to thee.* For I do not love thee for thy prosperity, and hate thee when thou art in in adversity as the world doth; but have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction, and came down

down from Heaven on purpoſe, to carry thy ſorrows, to bear thy burdens, and to help thee in all thy diſtreſſes. Therefore when afflictions come like floods, that would ſeem to drown all upon a ſuddain: yet they cannot drown my love to thee, which always remaineth one and the ſame.

Theſe words are written on purpoſe for us to have recourſe unto in time of diſtreſs, that when *Satan* leaveth no means unattempted, but uſeth all his skill to devour our faith: we might overcome him by theſe words of our beloved, by laying them up in our hearts as a moſt ſure and certain treaſure.

Now becauſe the nature of man is proud, it is apt to make an Objection, as thus. If I were better qualified, then I might have more aſſurance of Chriſts love: to this Chriſt anſwereth. If a man would give all *all the ſubſtance of his Houſe for love*, meaning thereby to obtain Chriſts love, *it would utterly be contemned*; that is, *of Chriſt*.

Now by ſubſtance of the Houſe, he meaneth, all works done in the fleſh, none of all which can procure the love of God to a Soul: but are all utterly contemned and deſpiſed, the aſſurance thereof being attained unto by faith alone.

Theſe words therefore, muſt utterly confound all opinion of works within us, and deſtroy all confidence in the fleſh: and it being

the Gospel, it must reach us also, so to expound all those Texts of Scripture, that seem to attribute something to works in attaining to the love of Christ, that the sense may be agreeable to what is here written.

VERSE VIII.

We have a little Sister, and she hath no breasts. What shall we do for our Sister in the day when she shall be spoken for?

THese are the words of the Church wherein she bemoaneth her little Sister, when the day comes that she is even ready for marriage; *what shall we do for her in the day when she shall be spoken for?* We are not to understand by the little Sister, only the Gentiles (as the most do,) which then (when Solomon wrote this Book) were without the Word; for then how shall it be understood now, since the Gentiles are called? Therefore, seeing this bemoaning of the little Sister is the voice of the Church in all ages; such a sense must be found as will agree to all times. Understand then by the little Sister, all those that are unlearned in the Doctrine of the Gospel, whether

ther they be *Jews* or *Gentiles*, within the Pale of the Church, or without; all that belong to the Election of grace, and are yet uncall'd. All theſe are comprehended under the Title of the little Siſter, which firſt or laſt, ſhall be ſpoken for. Little ſhe is, not in number, but in regard of knowledg of the way to Life and Salvation.

A Siſter ſhe is, yet not of whole blood, ſhe is Siſter by the Father, but not by the Mother. For *Abraham* had two Sons, which were brethren by the Father, but not by the Mother: So hath God almighty now form of people in the world (and but two) which are brethren by generation, but not by regeneration. They are brethern by the Father, as proceeding all from *Adam*: but not brethren by the Mother, being not yet new born in the Church.

And therefore ſhe ſays, ſhe hath yet no breaſts, that is, ſhe hath not breaſts of the true Mother, being not yet born. This little Siſter ſhe bewaileth and bemoaneth, not ſo much for the time preſent, as ſhe doth in thinking on the day when ſhe ſhall be ſpoken for. What ſhall we do for our little Siſter in that day? Which bemoaning is always among the Godly in the Church, and will be to the end of the world. What ſhall I do for my Husband, my Wife, my Son, my Daughter, my Friend?

Quest. But what is meant here by the day when she shall be spoken for?

Ans. I answer, the spouseman is the Lord Jesus Christ himself, and the day when the *little Sister is spoken for*, is when she feeleth her condemnation by the Law. They and all they that feel their condemnation by the Law they and all they are spoken for by the Lord Jesus Christ. Now she bemoaneth her little Sister in this condition, what shall we do for her that she may be married to Christ? And in that she doth so bewail her, and make it her principal care to help her: it giveth us to understand this.

That the principal care of the true Church of God for her little Sister is, that as soon as she perceiveth her to be spoken for, or condemned by the Law, to make diligent enquiry how to give her in marriage to the Lord Jesus Christ.

And the Reason is first, because to solemnize the Marriage between Christ and the Soul, is a work of the greatest difficulty that ever was, therefore the Church may well say what shall we do for our little Sister in that day. And also it is the most destructive to Satan's Kingdom of all things, and therefore the marriage is most strongly opposed by the Devil and his Angels. But chiefly because, unless the Soul be married to Christ, the compact between the Conscience and the Law can never be

be diſſolved or untied: but the ſame bargain or Covenant, that was made with man at firſt remains in force, which bindeth all men to the penalty, which is to endure the wrath of God for ever.

This informeth us, that there are but a very few that pertain to the true Church of God, becauſe there are ſo few that make it their principal care, to comfort their little Siſter in the day of her diſtreſs. When ſhe is afflicted with her ſin, and feeleth her condemnation by the Law, and is much broken and diſtreſſed by reaſon of great tribulations, and by theſe things is ſpoken for by the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that ſhe might be matched to himſelf: inſtead of making it the principal care, to give her in Marriage to the Son of God by faith alone, they endeavour with great earneſtneſs to preſent her to Chriſt by the works of the Law. Inſtead of diſſolving the compound, and making void the Covenant, that was made with man at firſt, and matching the Soul to Chriſt in an Everlaſting Covenant, that the guilt of her ſin might be removed, and that ſhe might be juſtified in the ſight of God, they endeavour in the firſt place (*as the only thing needful*) to Solemnize the contract between her Conſcience and the Law: Which is according to St. *Pauls* Allegory, but to preſent her an Adultreſs before God, for which ſhe, ſeeing ſhe is ſeparated thereby from the true God, ſhe is bound

Rom. 7.

Pandoms

in captivity under the guilt of sin, and in bondage to *Law* and the wrath of God for evermore.

All people therefore must learn from hence to imitate the true Church of God, which is to lay down the true grounds of consolation for their little Sister to rest on in the day of her distress, that as soon as she is spoken for and feeleth her condemnation by the Law, and that she hath no breasts of her own to nourish her in her misery; then to become instrumental to marry her to the Lord Jesus Christ by faith alone.

Now that the match may be made, and that she may be wedded to the Son of God, she must acknowledg her death by the Law, and take forgiveness for her sins with a believing heart, then is she free (according to St. *Paul*) from her first Husband the Law, being dead unto it through faith in the Son of God. For in that she feeleth and confesseth her death by the Law: the Law is also become dead, having lost its power and dominion. Then may we assure her, that the compound (*made void as at first*) is dissolved between the Covenant and the Law: and may also solemnize the contract between Christ and the Soul.

This is the duty we must all learn, for the helping and comforting of our little Sister, that she being so settled in the love of her Redeemer, she may burst forth into love and all good works amongst

amongſt men. To teach this point aright, hath hath ſome difficulty in it, as appears by the moan ſhe makes, what ſhall we do for her in that day, which ſheweth, it requireth ſome skill: yet this was her practice and endeavour, as appeareth in the next words.

VERSE IX.

If ſhe be a wall, we will build upon her a Palace of Silver: And if ſhe be a door, we will incloſe her with boards of Cedar.

WHich is as much as to ſay this, *if ſhe be a wall* that ſetleth aright upon the foundation laid in *Sion*, in the day that ſhe is ſpoken for, and doth not turn aſide to another foundation: *we will then build upon her*; that is, upon her principles a Palace for the King to delight himſelf in. Which Palace or Spiritual houſe, cannot perfectly be finiſhed until the full number of the Elect be call'd, until which time the true Church and every particular member thereof, according to his capacity laboureth in building. And it being ſaid to be braided of Silver, it ſheweth the matter that buildeth the Palace, *Heb.* 11.

which is the Doctrine of the Gospel, which
1 Cor. 3. elsewhere is compared to Gold, Silver, and
precious Stones, being pure and lasting, and
things of inestimable worth. And further,
if she be a dore, which is, that openeth to hear
and receive the promise of Everlasting life,
which is made to all those that are spoken for,
which feel and confess their death by the Law;
we will enclose her with boards of Cedar, she shall
be safe in the Kings Palace, where the King is
always present.

VERSE X.

I am a wall, and my breasts like Towers;
then was I in his eyes as one that found
Favour.

THe little Sister having heard that Christ by
the Law bespeaketh her for himself, that
she is not spoken to to be left under wrath and
condemnation, but spoken for that she might be
delivered from an opinion of righteousness by
the Law, and might be married to Christ; this
being the intent of the Spokesman, she con-
cludeth, *I am a Wall*. As soon as ever she
understandeth the Office of the Law truly, it
worketh in her a sence of Faith, (and so it is
with all people;) for it is as much as to say,

then

then I am settled in mind, for as much as the Office of the Law is not to justifie, but to bring me to Christ, that I might be justified by Faith. And she further saith, *my Breasts are like Towers*; the one of my Breasts destroyeth my opinion of righteousness by the Law, the other of my Breasts giveth me Life everlasting without the Law. These she saith are as Towers or Castles of Defence, which are built to preserve the City from the Enemy. He that liveth in both these Towers, is safe from the malice of Satan, and wrath of God. This knowledge of Christ breaketh the head of Satan, and utterly aboliſheth his Kingdom, therefore she addeth, *then was I in his Eyes as one that found favour*; then, and not till then. The knowledge of the Gospel giveth us a certain evidence, that we are in God's favour. Mark this then well, that thou attainest not his favour by the Works of the Law, but only by Faith in Christ without the Law; which Faith condemneth thee by the Law, and so destroyeth thine opinion of the Law, and giveth thee an assurance, that Christ is given most freely where that opinion is destroyed.

Learn thou then to believe, that Christ is given to thee, because, because thou feelest and confessest thy just condemnation by the Law. Then shalt thou also become a Wall, and thy *Breasts like Towers*. They that require nothing but Works in building the Wall, do *daub it with untempered mortar*, which shall be broken

Ezek. 13. 10.

Ezek. 13. 14, 15.

broken down, and they that daubed it. Learn thou then with *Paul*, *even through the Law to become dead to the Law*, that thou maist *live unto God* without the Law, then shalt thou be *in his Eyes*, *as one that findeth favour*.

VERSE XI.

Solomon had a Vineyard at Baal-hamon, he let out the Vineyard unto keepers: every one for the fruit thereof, was to bring a thousand pieces of Silver.

CHrist in these words compares his own Vineyard, the Church, with the Vineyard of *Solomon* at *Baalhamon*, which formerly was his Father *David's*; who appointed Officers to look to his Vineyard, and to manure it, and (*Chro.* 24. to pay him an yearly Tribute for the same, and to retain part of the profit themselves. Now the Vineyard of our King *Solomon* is the House (*Isa.* 5. of *Israel*, the universal Church of *Jews* and *Gentiles*; and *Baalhamon* (which signifies the Owner of a multitude) sheweth the place where this Vineyard is planted, even amongst the multitudes of this World. He lets out his (*Mat.* 21. 34. Vineyard also to Keepers, that is according to the Parable to *Husbandmen*, to manure it and dress it; and the reason rendered in the Parable is,

that they (meaning the Husbandmen, as well as himself) might receive the Fruits of the Vine, viz. Which is Life everlasting; and also to yield unto himself a continual Tribute, which is to render everlasting thanks and praises unto God, for his infinite mercies and loving kindness to us, and to serve him with joyfulness all the days of our Lives; which is said here to be *a thousand pieces of silver*. And this is all that is expected from us by our Lord King *Solomon*. Now he sheweth in the next Words, there is great reason we should return him thanks and praise, for he says,

VERSE XII.

My Vineyard which is mine, is before me.

I Set mine Eyes upon it continually, and my care is always for it, and although I sometimes hide mine Eyes from it (seemingly for a time) yet I keep it night and day lest any hurt it. In answer to this, follows next the words of the Spouse,

Thou (O Solomon) must have a thousand,

Which

Which is an indefinite Speech, meaning, To thee, O *Solomon*, be all praise and thanks for evermore, for it is thy due; for thou art worthy to receive all glory, honour, and praise, for ever and ever. Where she attributeth to Christ all that he requireth of her, which is to sing everlasting praises to the honour of his name. Next follows the last words of the Bridegroom in this Song:

——And they that keep the fruit thereof two Hundred.

By which he meaneth also praises, which sheweth, he is so far from begrudging any one the Fruits of his Death and Resurrection, that whosoever is but willing to receive the same, shall have honour and praise for so doing; for *they that keep the Fruit thereof must have two hundred*, that is, they shall be crowned with everlasting praise and honour at the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is a most wonderful comfort to all poor wretches, that almost all their Lives long are are oppressed with sins, sorrows, cares, crosses and calamities, which through manifold temptation, are continually in heavinels of heart: who if they are but willing to receive the fruits of the Vineyard, they shall have two hundred. They shall have honour and praise and glory at

at the appearing of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Next follow the words of the ſpouſe which cloſe up the whole *Song*.

VERSE XIII, & XIIII.

Thou that dwelleſt in the Gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice: cauſe me to hear it.

Make haſte, my beloved, and be thou like to a Roe, or a young Hart upon the Mountains of Spices.

VVHich words are a Prayer, wherein the Church calleth upon *her beloved*, not as the high and lofty one that doth inhabit Eternity; but ſhe looketh upon him as one whoſe dwelling is in *Sion*, and whoſe delight is with the Sons of Men. *O thou that dwelleſt in the Gardens!* that are conſtant and reſident with thy poor afflicted people. *Thy companions hearken to thy voice*, meaning thoſe that are in Church fellowſhip, they hearken, but they do not underſtand. *cauſe me to hear it*, meaning the whole company of the Elect, who muſt all be united through faith into one body and ſpiritual communion. *Make haſte my beloved*, my earneſt deſire is that this thing be ſpeedily accompliſhed: *that even*

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as the Roe or young hart doth speedily skip over the Mountains where spices grow, So do thou speedily destroy all those Mountains in man that produce fruitlesness and barrenness, that the spices of the Gospel may enter into the hearts of all thine Elect: that the guilt of sin may be removed, the reign of sin subdued, that all afflictions may be sanctified, and the whole universal Church may be armed and fortified against all the assaults of *Satan* in this life, and may receive Eternal glory in the life to come.

FINIS.

A PARAPHRASE ON THE CANTICLE OR, *SONG of SOLOMO.*

By the late LEARNED, *and Pious* PROTESTANT,

THOMAS AGER.

LONDON,
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101. g. 34.

Verse XI.

Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field, let us lodge in the Villages.

The Church being espoused to Christ, through the great affection of her beloved, and also having found the new and living way how to attain this Heavenly knowledge, to be assured thereof: desireth (*after the manner of one that is espoused or contracted in marriage*) to go forth into the Fields, that her beloved may be known. By which she meaneth Gods Fields, where Gods Husbandry and his tillage is, and also where the true and living way to life, is not yet rightly understood: thither she desireth to go with her beloved, therefore she says, let us lodge there, by which she meaneth her Doctrine, that the Husbandry of God may go forward, and that Christ may come to some more esteem amongst them.

And by Villages she meaneth, such as where Christ and his Apostles *went up and down Preaching the Gospel.* By which we see, that the Churches care is not only to receive the Gospel, but also to plant the Gospel, and this she cannot do without her beloved; therefore she taketh

taketh Chriſt with her. Thoſe that go forth into the Vineyard without the Beloved may compel men to labour and toil, to bear the burden and heat of the day: but they can never gather a ſheaf into Gods barn.

And this muſt be the care of every one in his place, to go forth with Chriſt into the Fields, and help to ſet forwards the Husbandry of God, that a good foundation may be laid for harveſt: to lodge his Doctrine in the Villages, that ſo the ſeeds of Eternal life being ſown in the minds of men, there may be hopes of a joyful crop.

There muſt not be only plowing in Gods field, but alſo ſowing. For how can any man expect a crop at harveſt, if he ſhall only Plow, and break the clods, and make plain the face of the Earth, if he never ſow the ſeed? Now the ſower is the ſon of man, not *Moſes*, but Chriſt. Which ploweth up the fallow ground of the heart by the condemning power of the Law: and then it ſoweth the immortal ſeed of the word into the diſtreſſed mind.

Moſes neither ſoweth the ſeed, nor yet plow-eth up the fallow ground: but only command-eth it to grow, and if it proſper, promiſeth a goodly Harveſt. Thoſe that pertain to the Kingdom of *Moſes*, do require the works of the Law to be done; and then promiſe Eternal life to the doers, but touch it not with the leaſt of their fingers. Theſe plant nothing In

Moſes ſaith do it and live, but break it and die: which neither plow-eth nor ſoweth: therefore

Gods field but (*only that which which was there before they nouriſh*) an opinion of themſelves; which nothing changeth the nature of the ground, which is a moſt miſerable evil, and marreth all good Husbandry in the Church of God.

without Chriſt Moſes is a deſtroyer: becauſe the promiſe being made to doing, all men naturally think to obtain it that way; But Chriſt ſaith thou haſt ſinned and art deprived of the glory of God: and calleth us to believe the ſame, and to fly to himſelf by faith and confeſſion.

Therefore *Moſes* without a Mediator ſerveth not, but only to bridle the outward man and to keep it in fear: but in the hand of a Mediator, that is to ſay Chriſt, is of rare an Excellent uſe, Firſt to reveal ſin to the Conſcience that it may be driven to Chriſt: next it openeth a light unto us to teach us how to ſerve in newneſs of Spirit, and not in the oldneſs of the Letter.

VERSE

Verse XII.

Let us get up early to the Vineyards, let us ſee if the Vine flouriſh, whether the tender grapes appear, and the Pomegranates bud forth: there will I give thee my loves.

THis Verſe ſetteth forth the care and diligence of the Church in looking to thoſe that were planted in it. Where by Vineyards ſhe meaneth, thoſe particular congregations where the word is taught. *And by the Vine, Chriſt.* *And by the tender grape, the Conſcience made tender by the word of God.* And by the budding of the *Pomegranate*, the growth of the Church in Heavenly Doctrine, and in ſhewing forth all good works before men. And in that ſhe ſays, *let us go up early to the Vineyards*, it meaneth before falſe Teachers creep in and ſpoil the fruit. For as ſoon as the Fox cometh he falleth upon the Vine, he endeavoureth to ſpoil Chriſt of his name and glory.

Eſa. 1. *Joh.* 15.

Therefore to prevent this, ſhe ſaith, *let us get up to the Vineyards*, meaning the principal members in the Church, both in the Magiſtracy and Miniſtry: whoſe care ought to be, that the Church be rightly inſtructed in ſound Doctrine, and that order be taken with thoſe that

that are perverters of the Gospel. There she saith, *I will give thee my loves*, that is, in so doing, I will testify my loves unto thee; meaning to Christ: She speaketh in the plural number, because it is more then a bare single love, it being not only to Christ, but also to his Members. The sum of all is this.

That it is a very great Testimony of love to God, and a principal means in causing the Lords Vineyard to become fruitful, when an early care is taken, by the principal Members in the Church; that the word be purely taught, and that the mouths of false Teachers be stopped.

If the word be not rightly taught, no man's Conscience can be edified: if the mouths of seducers be not shut *Satan* will quickly pervert the Gospel of Christ. Either of these wants hindereth the fruitfulness of the Vineyard; and in a manner layeth it waste. Such therefore must be charged by *Timothy*, that they Preach no other Doctrine: or else by *Titus* their mouths must be stopped.

Want of care in this thing betimes, spoileth the flourishing of the Vine, *the budding of the Pomegranate:* neither doth the tender grape hardly every appear.

Care therefore must be taken in this, that no person be suffered in the *Vineyard*, that is a Seducer: nor set to work in the *Vineyard*, unless

unless *he be a cunning Artificer*, a man of skill, that is able to succour the tender grape, and to refresh the *Pomegranate*, that his buds may shoot forth and appear.

This is a work highly acceptable to the Father, who is the great Husbandman, and to the son who is the Archbishop of his Church; and therefore I humble conceive it ought to be the care of every Bishop.

If any man offend in his life, the Magistrate is to punish him, but if any man go about to pervert the Gospel: *Paul* and *Barnabas* must go up to *Jerusalem* about the Question, where should always be some that are able to hear and determin the same.

Whatsoever care is taken, or ought to be taken, about matters of Discipline, yet, it is most certain, that the main, and principal thing to be cared for, and looked after, is matter of Doctrine: that mens Consciences be rightly instructed, otherwise no man can be saved.

What misery is come upon us, for many years past, for want of this care, we have seen by woful experience.

VERSE

Verse XIII.

The Mandrakes give a ſmell, at our gates are all manner of pleaſant fruits, both new and old, which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved!

THeſe are the words of Chriſt, which are of the nature of a promiſe to ſupply his Church with the variety of all pleaſant fruits.

And firſt of all, he ſpeaketh of the ſweetneſs of the *Mandrakes*, of which we read in *Gen.* 30. 14. which were found by *Reuben* in the time of Wheat Harveſt.

All that I gather from it is this. *Reuben* was the firſt born ſon of *Jacob*: which firſt born ſon was a type of Chriſt, the firſt born among many brethren.

Now the *Mandrakes* being brought by *Reuben* to his Mother *Leah*, (*which were very delightful as it appears by Rachel*) it ſheweth unto us the Excellency of the fruits that come to us by Chriſt who is the firſt begotten of the dead: which are the fruits of his Death and Reſurrection, manifeſted by the Preaching of the Goſpel. Which are ſaid to be pleaſant Fruits,

Fruits, meaning to the tender afflicted Conſcience.

The time when they appear ſo pleaſant is, when the gates are opened: when the Goſpel of Eternal life is opened and rightly applyed to the tender Conſcience. Theſe Fruits are ſaid to be *New and Old*, not in reſpect of ſubſtance of Doctrine, but the variety.

And it being ſaid, *which I have laid up for thee my beloved*, it ſheweth, that all the ſecret Miſteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, that have been hid from ages: are laid up on purpoſe by Chriſt himſelf, to beſtow upon thoſe that put an high eſtimation upon them. And this I conceive to be the meaning of the words. *Note.*

And the Reaſon why they are laid up only for ſuch is, becauſe the Miſteries of the Kingdom of Heaven are of an Infinit value, therefore muſt not be beſtowed upon thoſe that will deſpiſe them: they are of ſo great a price that no man is able to put an eſtimate upon them, they are beyond Silver, Gold, and Rubies, and all things that can be deſired.

Now who can imagine that Jewels of ſuch ineſtimable worth, ſhall be given to ſuch that ſhall only Trample them under ther Feet? Therefore Chriſt hath laid them up *for his beloved:* Even for thoſe that eſteem of them moſt highly, above their appointed food. *Prov.* 3. 15.

Which

Which openeth the cauſe, and ſheweth us the Reaſon, why there are ſo few that are acquainted with the ſecrets of the word of God, that underſtand ſo little of the Miſteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, it is not becauſe Chriſt is not willing to open the Secrets, and reveal the Miſteries, but the reaſon is, becauſe men put no eſtimation upon them.

Chriſt hath laid up all manner of pleaſant Fruits, hath abundance in ſtore to beſtow, of things both *New and Old*, upon all thoſe that are willing to receive them: but no man cares for the taſte of them.

The Mandrakes give a moſt Excellent ſmell: but no man careth for the ſcent. At wiſdoms gates *are all manner of pleaſants Fruits*, even thoſe that heal the Nations, that ſave us from the Everlaſting wrath of God: but we value them not, we look not after them, but ſet an higher eſtimation upon Tranſitory things that periſh, then upon thoſe Everlaſting things, that ſhall never decay.

Juſt like unto Children, that more eſteem of a Counter of little or no value at all, than of a rich Jewel that is of great price.

Therefore no man muſt blame the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but only himſelf, if he ſhould one day ſee, many to come from the Eaſt and Weſt, and ſit down with *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, in the Kingdom of the Father; and he himſelf to be thruſt out.

If

If he ſhould at the laſt day, for deſpiſing of the Goſpel, be ſeparated from the preſence of the Lord (*in whoſe preſence there is fulneſs of joy*) and ſhould be driven to ſuffer the puniſhment of loſs, and the puniſhment of ſenſe for ever: yet I ſay, no man can complain, or once open his mouth againſt the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is willing to beſtow all bleſſings upon men, but they do not value them, nor eſteem them.

All men will put a muſt, and neceſſity upon themſelves in other matters, to riſe early, and to go to bed late, and to eat the bread of carefulneſs: but ſcarce any man counts it a neceſſity to attend at the gates of wiſdom, to ſeek after knowledg, to call and cry for underſtanding, without which every man muſt periſh for evermore.

Learn we then (*before it be too late*) to put an high price upon the things of the Goſpel, then ſhall the Myſtery be opened to us, which is lock'd up and hid from the wicked deſpiſers thereof. Which thing we can never do, unleſs we feel our need of the Goſpel, and the Infinit worth that there is in it to ſerve our neceſſities.

Let us therefore learn to behold, the evil ſcent that our ſins do caſt into the noſtrils of God, that we may be afflicted with the ſame: next, we muſt ſmell to the *Mandrakes*, which are

are brought unto us by the first born. Then shall we find the blessedness that is at wisdoms gates, and begin to tast of the pleasant fruits of Christ death both *New and Old:* which are for all those, and only those that do esteem them, according as Christ says here, *which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved.*

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

VERSE I.

O that thou wert as my brother, that ſucked the breaſts of my Mother, when I ſhould find thee without, I would kiſs thee: yet I ſhould not be deſpiſed.

THE Church hearing from Chriſt the Excellent things that are laid up for her, and only her which eſteemeth of the ſame: wiſheth that all thoſe that live in the ſame Society with her, might partake of the ſame pleaſant Fruits. Therefore ſhe ſays, *O that thou!* meaning a viſible brother unconverted, or the whole company of thoſe that do diſſent from her, in the true principles of faith and good works. *Wert as my brother*, that is, my natural brother in the faith. *That ſucked the breaſts of my Mother:* meaning *Jeruſalem* which is above, the Free mother, and Mother of us all: which the Children of the bond-woman pertain not unto. Theſe words amount

to as much as this, there is a difference between thy Mother, and my Mother: my Mother freely giveth the milk of the Gospel without the works of the Law: thy Mother giveth nothing without, but for the observance of the Law.

Now because she gendereth Children by the Law, therefore thou art not without, but under the Law. *If I could find thee without*, that is to say the Law, or thine own opinion of Righteousness by the Law, *then would I kiss thee*; which meaneth, with the comforts of the Gospel: but because thou dependest upon the Law, thou therefore excludest thy self from the promises of God, and despisest me when I offer the kiss: but if I could find thee without the Law, *then would I kiss thee*, yet I should not be despised.

This sheweth us, that there is a wonderful difference, between people that are born under the same Covenant of promise. The one she says, is my brother that sucked the breasts of my Mother: the other is but as *Abraham* said of his Wife, the Daughter of my Father but not the Daughter of my Mother. For it cannot be denied, but that they are the people of God visibly, to whom the Oracles of God are given: yet that doth not make them Children of Adoption, unless they suck the breasts of the true Mother, whereby they learn the true knowledg and sense of the Scriptures.

There-

Therefore ſhe ſaith, O that thou wert as my brother that ſuck'd! Which ſheweth, that they never yet taſted of the Teat.

The ſame thing muſt we alſo deſire earneſtly and heartily, for our brethren that live with us in the ſame viſible Society which yet are averſe to the faith of Chriſt. That if it be poſſible we might find them without, that ſo they being divorced from their opinion of Righteouſneſs by the Law: we might freely beſtow upon them a kiſs by the Goſpel without being ſcorned, contemned, or deſpiſed.

This alſo ſheweth us clearly what the condition of the Goſpel is, namely, to be without the Law, to be found without our own works and righteouſneſs, for mark it, if I ſhould find thee without, *then would I kiſs thee:* as much as to ſay, then would I, upon this only condition, Adminiſter the the comforts of the Goſpel unto thee. Nothing can be more clear to ſettle us in the ground of our faith, then what is here written.

Therefore when thou art afflicted for thy ſin, and comeſt before God, thou muſt learn to believe in Chriſt, without and againſt the Law: and fully to perſwade thy ſelf, that the Goſpel is thine becauſe thou art without an opinion of the Law.

Then ſhalt thou be enabled and encouraged when thou comeſt before men: to live in the uſe and practiſe of the Law.

Verse II.

I would lead thee, and bring thee into my Mothers houſe, who would inſtruct me, I would cauſe thee to drink of ſpiced wine, of the juyce of my Pomegranate.

THeſe words ſet forth the kindneſs of the Church towards thoſe that are coming on in the faith. *I would lead thee*, that is, if I could find thee without, I would guide thee, and become inſtrumental to bring thee, with Honour and Solemnity. *Into my Mothers houſe*, amongſt the Spiritual people that belong to the Family of God, that are fill'd with Heavenly liquor, and are willing freely to beſtow it: by whoſe acquaintance thy Conſcience ſhould be covered with the voice of joy and gladneſs, for my Mother to whom I would bring thee, *would inſtruct me*. She changeth the perſon here to ſhew the unity that faith maketh amongſt the Saints. *I would cauſe thee to drink of ſpiced wine*. I would cauſe thee

thee by Divine reaſons and arguments, to receive, not only wine (without any thing to compound with it, meaning the Righteouſneſs of a man only) but *I would cauſe thee to drink of ſpiced Wine.* Which is made more Excellent by reaſon of art in mixture: even of the Righteouſneſs of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which being ſpiced and perfumed with the Merit of his Godhead, preſerveth the Conſcience from the wrath of God, and the fear of Eternal death.

This I would cauſe thee to drink of, even by a holy kind of violence and compulſion, that thou ſhouldeſt not forgo it. Which ſhe calleth here *the juyce of her Pomegranate*, becauſe it being freely beſtowed upon the Church by Chriſt himſelf, ſhe alſo freely giveth it, to all that are willing to receive it.

This ſheweth us, what kindneſs thoſe that are ſtrong in the faith, ought to ſhew towards thoſe poor wretches that are newly coming on. Even to take them as it were by the hand, and bring them into *their Mothers houſe*, to bring them acquainted with the Spiritual people, that they may be well inſtructed in the Goſpel, even to thoſe that are fill'd with *ſpiced wine*, that have ſtore *of the juyce of the Pomegranate*, that are able by Divine arguments, and by a holy kind of violence, to faſten the words of Eternal life upon them.

All men muſt be willing, and no man muſt think himſelf too great or too good to ſtoop to help poor dejected creatures this way. Moſt men will be willing to diſcourſe with thoſe that are able and great in the Church that have leaſt need of help: but what ſhall become of poor ſilly creatures that are ignorant? Why ſhould not poor people when they are found without, and much diſtreſſed (in conſideration of their own barreneſs, and by reaſon of the croſs and great tribulations) be ſaluted with the kiſs of the Goſpel, (ſeeing it hath been and is the practiſe of the godly) rather then thoſe that are better able to help themſelves?

The want of this thing ſheweth, that there are but a very few that do live in the right Practice of Piety.

VERSE III.

His left hand ſhould be under my head: and his right hand ſhould embrace me.

THeſe words ſeem to prevent an objection that may be made by a Conſcience in diſtreſs, for when once a man feeleth himſelf under the curſe and in great tribulations, he begins to be afraid, and to cry out for help, What ſhall I do?

To this the Church anſwereth here after the manner of a Lover, *his left hand ſhall be under my head*, meaning his humanity. *And his right hand ſhall embrace me*, meaning his Divinity. She ſpeaketh in the firſt perſon, but the whole company of believers are included: being all one body by faith.

The Church teacheth this Divine and Heavenly art, how to unlade the Conſcience of ſins, burthens, cares and calamities, upon the humanity of Chriſt, who nail'd them all to his croſs, and burried them in his grave; and how to receive the embraces of Chriſt from his Divinity, whereby he conquered all the enemies of man.

After the ſame manner muſt we alſo learn and teach others, even when the Conſcience is in diſtreſs, to unlade it by faith, upon Chriſts humanity: and when we ſtand in need of any help or ſuccour, then by faith to receive it from the Divinity. Then ſhall we by the bleſſings of *his left hand*, be eaſed of our burthens and ſorrows: and by the bleſſings of *his right hand*, ſhall have a ſupply of all our wants from him.

Verse IV.

I charge you, O yee Daughters of Jeruſalem, that yee ſtir not up, nor awake my love, until he pleaſe.

THis charge is given by Chriſt to the Daughters of *Jeruſalem* not to diſturb the Bride, in this her holy faith and confidence, wherein ſhe ſweetly ſleepeth and reſteth ſecure, in the promiſes contrary to reaſon: and not to awake her until *himſelf pleaſe*, which is never.

Verse

VERSE V.

Who is this that cometh out of the wilderneſs leaning upon her beloved? ——

THeſe are the continued words of Chriſt, and ſo to the eight Verſe. And it is a Note of admiration at the ſpouſe, in that ſhe leaneth upon Chriſt by faith in all the tribulations that ſhe meeteth with, in the wilderneſs of this world: by which faith ſhe alſo cometh out of them all.

She is not commended, nor admired at, for her Riches, Honour, Proſperity, and eſteem amongſt men: For in the wilderneſs ſhe is commonly without all theſe things, being afflicted with Poverty, Reproach, and all manner of Calamities. Counted as an object, and as the off-ſcowring of all things.

Yet in that ſhe doth not faint and pine away in this Condition, but humbleth and ſubmitteth her ſelf to the croſs, *and leaneth upon her beloved through faith*, ſhe is look't upon with a Note of admiration. *Who is this?* We ſee this then clear.

That at the ſelf ſame time, that the Church is look't upon as an object of reproach, and of no eſteeem by men of the World; ſhe is look't

look't upon with admiration by the Lord Jesus Christ.

In that she is in the Wilderness, where she is afflicted: being without the glory of the World, she is despised of men, but in that she is not offended at her condition, but leaneth upon her beloved by Faith, she is look't upon with admiration by the Lord Jesus Christ. And the reason why she is so much admired is, because she fighteth with the word of God, against all enimies at once: she setteth the Gospel against all oppositions; therefore *Christ says here, Who is this?* She hath not only Enemies without, but also within, she hath the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, yet with one weapon she over-comes them all, and that is Faith in her beloved.

Which consideration must wonderfully comfort all those poor wretches, which are much afflicted by men, that are despised and rejected of the World: who by reason of their blemishes and staines, or poverty, or any outward calamity, (which things are common in the Wilderness) are despised and reproached, and even utterly rejected of the World; yet, (in that they are willing to submit unto the Cross without being offended: to humble themselves and cleave to Christ by Faith) their comfort lies in this, that at the very same time that they are despised of men, they are look't upon with admiration by the Lord Jesus Christ. Which must encourage every man to submit himself to his Heavenly Father,

if

if he pleaſe to exerciſe him in ſuch a condition.

This courſe muſt we alſo take, when the Conſcience accuſeth us, the Law threatneth, and we can apprehend nothing but death Eternal: even then muſt we fall down before him confeſſing our ſins, and hearken to the words of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who at the very ſelf ſame time that we humble our ſelves before him, doth ſpeak good and comfortable words unto us, on purpoſe to draw us to himſelf; therefore muſt we hearken to him and believe his words, then ſhall we not only feed upon the hid *Manna*, that will comfort us in the wilderneſs: but alſo joyfully ſhall come forth of the *wilderneſs leaning upon our beloved.*

——*I raiſed thee up under the apple-tree: there thy Mother brought thee forth, there ſhe brought thee forth that bare thee.*

Theſe words ſhew how this faith and dependance was wrought in the Church. *I raiſed thee up under the Apple-tree.* By the Apple-tree is meant Chriſt himſelf. And it being ſaid under the Apple-tree, it ſheweth, that no man can be raiſed to any degree in the faith, without the fruits of the Tree.

And

And alſo that the fruits of Chriſts death and reſurrection, do naturally and freely drop upon all thoſe that are willing to ſit under the Tree and receive them. By the Mother is here meant the Church, and by her bringing forth, regeneration, which new birth *is under the Apple-tree: for there ſhe brought thee forth that bare thee.*

Now in that he ſays, *I raiſed thee up*, he diſtinguiſheth himſelf from *Moſes* or the Law; not but that Chriſt maketh uſe of the Law in the raiſing up of the Church, but in a different reſpect to thoſe that do not rightly teach the Law.

Chriſt maketh uſe of the Law to humble the ſinner, that it may be driven to Chriſt by faith, to be juſtified without the Law: but the Miniſtry of *Moſes*, promiſeth, juſtification and life to none but thoſe that turn from ſin Morally according to the the Terms of the Law: and herein lies the difference between the true and the falſe handling of the Law, and by this mark only, may we diſcern the voice of Chriſt, from the voice of *Moſes*.

Now *Moſes* caſteth all men down, but raiſeth up no man by his Miniſtry, becauſe he ſetteth them not under the Heavenly Apple-tree, but endeavoureth to raiſe them firſt by other fruit: therefore he maketh the heart of the righteous ſad, whom the Lord hath not made ſad.

But

But Chriſt caſteth down all men by the Law, but raiſeth them up again by his own fruits: even the fruits of the Heavenly Apple-tree. And after this manner doth the true Mother exerciſe all her Children by the Miniſtry.

Firſt, ſhe caſteth them down by a right adminiſtration of *Moſes*: next ſhe raiſeth them up again by Chriſt her Heavenly Apple-tree.

Thus muſt we alſo ſuffer our ſelves, to be hewen down by the Law, that we may be ſtripped of all our glory and boaſting principles: and alſo be willing to receive the fruit that droppeth from Chriſt our Heavenly Apple-tree, that our Conſciences may be healed of the guilt and filth of all our ſins.

VERSE VI.

Set me as a Seal upon thine heart, as a Signet upon thine Arm: for love is ſtrong as death, jealouſie is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a moſt vehement Flame.

THeſe words are not to be underſtood of the Churches ſpeech to Chriſt as ſome imagine; but of Chriſts words to the Church. Wherein

Wherein he plainly inſtructeth her, how her faith and dependance ſhall be continued and ſtrengthned. Which is thus, *ſet me as a ſeal upon thine heart. Me*, Meaning the promiſes of the Goſpel. *As a ſeal*, that they may make an impreſſion, and leave the print of it behind: ſuch an impreſſion that the word may be rooted and grounded in the Soul. *And on thine arm*, meaning the viſible ſign or ſeal, the Goſpel being a double ſeal, the word and Sacraments: and all is to arm and prepare us againſt the evil day.

Then he gives the reaſon, for love is ſtrong as death, by which he meaneth his own love. My love to thee is ſtrong as death, therefore build upon it. For as death is of moſt invincible ſtrength which ſwalloweth up and overcometh all things, ſo ſaith Chriſt is my love to thee. So that the love of Chriſt, manifeſted to us in the Preaching of the Goſpel, being received by faith, ſwalloweth up Death, Hell, the Grave, the Curſe: and briefly, all things elſe whatſoever, that may make us any way miſerable. *But jealouſie is cruel as the Grave*, meaning cruel to the ſpouſe, when through the ſtrength of Temptation ſhe begins to Queſtion the love of Chriſt to her, and grows jealous of the ſame: and can hardly be perſwaded to the contrary, this whereſoever it reigneth is *even as the Grave*, which ſwalloweth up, and putteth an end to all the comforts

ſorts of man. *The coals of it are coals of fire:* Meaning that even as fire where it once catcheth, *hath a moſt vehement Flame*, ſo that if it be not ſuddenly quenched, it burneth up and conſumeth all things: So it is with every dejected Soul, when once it begins to grow jealous of the love of God, and will not have the comforts of the Goſpel to faſten upon it. So grievous a thing is unbelief, that where it is lodged: it burneth up and conſumeth, all true opinions of God, and of his Holy Word.

Therefore, ſeeing our loving Lord Jeſus Chriſt out of his wonderful care and love to us, to ſtrengthen us in our faith, and to preſerve us from this dreadful and bitter Temptation: ſays here, *ſet me as a ſeal upon thine heart*, let us ſuffer the Goſpel to make an impreſſion within us; and look upon it as the decree of Heaven that can never be changed. And ſeeing it muſt be as a Seal alſo upon our arm, let us never leave till we are able to find out the true Myſtery, and meaning in the Sacraments, and to receive it by faith.

And ſeeing his love is ſo ſtrong unto us as death, that putteth an end to all our diſcomforts whatſoever, let us never Queſtion his favour, nor be jealous of his love any more, but let his word ſerve for all; So that although our Sins and Temptations are many, and our afflictions as great as any that are common to man,

man, yet as ſoon as we humble our ſelves before him, and call upon him in faith and confidence; let us aſſure our ſelves, that he can look upon us no otherwiſe but as objects of his love, which love he having once ſet upon us, it continueth for ever, ſo that no afflictions whatſoever we meet with, muſt be an argument ſufficient to diſſwade us from believing the ſame. According as here next followeth.

Verse VII.

Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the ſubſtance of his houſe for love, it would utterly be contemned.

It is as much as if Chriſt had ſaid this, the many afflictions that thou meeteſt with in this world be they ever ſo many, and like waters that do overflow, *yet they cannot quench my love to thee.* For I do not love thee for thy proſperity, and hate thee when thou art in in adverſity as the world doth; but have choſen thee in the furnace of affliction, and came down

down from Heaven on purpoſe, to carry thy ſorrows, to bear thy burdens, and to help thee in all thy diſtreſſes. Therefore when afflictions come like floods, that would ſeem to drown all upon a ſuddain: yet they cannot drown my love to thee, which always remaineth one and the ſame.

Theſe words are written on purpoſe for us to have recourſe unto in time of diſtreſs, that when *Satan* leaveth no means unattempted, but uſeth all his skill to devour our faith: we might overcome him by theſe words of our beloved, by laying them up in our hearts as a moſt ſure and certain treaſure.

Now becauſe the nature of man is proud, it is apt to make an Objection, as thus. If I were better qualified, then I might have more aſſurance of Chriſts love: to this Chriſt anſwereth. If a man would give all *all the ſubſtance of his Houſe for love*, meaning thereby to obtain Chriſts love, *it would utterly be contemned*; that is, *of Chriſt*.

Now by ſubſtance of the Houſe, he meaneth, all works done in the fleſh, none of all which can procure the love of God to a Soul: but are all utterly contemned and deſpiſed, the aſſurance thereof being attained unto by faith alone.

Theſe words therefore, muſt utterly confound all opinion of works within us, and deſtroy all confidence in the fleſh: and it being

the Gospel, it must teach us also, so to expound all those Texts of Scripture, that seem to attribute something to works in attaining to the love of Christ, that the sense may be agreeable to what is here writen.

Verse VIII.

We have a little Sister, and she hath no breasts. What shall we do for our Sister in the day when she shall be spoken for?

These are the words of the Church wherein she bemoaneth her little Sister, when the day comes that she is even ready for marriage: *what shall we do for her in the day when she shall be spoken for?* We are not to understand by the little Sister, only the Gentiles, (as the most do,) which then (when *Solomon* wrote this Book) were without the word; for then how shall it be understood now seeing the Gentiles are called? Therefore seeing this bemoaning of the little Sister is the voice of the Church in all ages: such a sense must be found as will agree to all times. Understand then by the little Sister, all those that are unlearned in the Doctrine of the Gospel, whi-

the

ther they be *Jews* or *Gentiles*, within the Pale of the Church, or without: all that belong to the Election of grace, and are yet uncall'd. All theſe are comprehended under the Title of the little Siſter, which firſt or laſt, ſhall be ſpoken for. Little ſhe is, not in number, but in regard of knowledg of the way to Life and Salvation.

A Siſter ſhe is, yet not of whole blood, ſhe is Siſter by the Father, but not by the Mother. For as *Abraham* had two Sons, which were brethren by the Father, but not by the Mother: So hath God Almighty two ſorts of people in the world (and but two) which are brethren by generation, but not by regenertion. They are brethern by the Father, as proceeding all from *Adam:* but not brethren by the Mother, being not yet new born in the Church.

And therefore ſhe ſays, ſhe hath yet no breaſts, that is, ſhe hath not breaſts of the true Mother, being not yet born. This little Siſter ſhe bewaileth and bemoaneth, not ſo much for the time preſent, as ſhe doth in thinking on the day when ſhe ſhall be ſpoken for. What ſhall we do for our little Siſter in that day? Which bemoaning is always among the Godly in the Church, and will be to the end of the world. What ſhall I do for my Husband, my Wife, my Son, my Daughter, my Friend?

Queſt. But what is meant here by the day when ſhe ſhall be ſpoken for?

Anſ. I anſwer, the ſpouſeman is the Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, and the day when the *little Siſter is ſpoken for*, is when ſhe feeleth her condemnation by the Law. They and all they, that feel their condemnation by the Law: they and all they are ſpoken for by the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Now ſhe bemoaneth her little Siſter in this condition, what ſhall we do for her that ſhe may be married to Chriſt? And in that ſhe doth ſo bewail her, and make it her principal care to help her: it giveth us to underſtand this.

That the principal care of the true Church of God for her little Siſter is, that as ſoon as ſhe perceiveth her to be ſpoken for, or condemned by the Law: to make dilligent enquiry, how to give her in marriage to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

And the Reaſon is firſt, becauſe to Solemnize the Marriage between Chriſt and the Soul, is a work of the greateſt difficulty that ever was, therefore the Church may well ſay, what ſhall we do for our little Siſter in that day? And alſo it is the moſt deſtructive to *Satans* Kingdom of all things, and therefore the marriage is moſt ſtrongly oppoſed by the Devil and his Angels. But chiefly becauſe, unleſs the Soul be married to Chriſt, the compound between the Conſcience and the Law can never be

be diſſolved or untied: but the ſame bargain or Covenant, that was made with man at firſt remains in force, which bindeth all men to the penalty, which is to endure the wrath of God for ever.

This informeth us, that there are but a very few that pertain to the true Church of God, becauſe there are ſo few that make it their principal care, to comfort their little Siſter in the day of her diſtreſs. When ſhe is afflicted with her ſin, and feeleth her condemnation by the Law, and is much broken and diſtreſſed by reaſon of great tribulations, and by theſe things is ſpoken for by the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that ſhe might be matched to himſelf: inſtead of making it the principal care, to give her in Marriage to the Son of God by faith alone, they endeavour with great earneſtneſs to preſent her to Chriſt by the works of the Law. Inſtead of diſſolving the compound, and making void the Covenant, that was made with man at firſt, and matching the Soul to Chriſt in an Everlaſting Covenant: that the guilt of her ſin might be removed, and that ſhe might be juſtified in the ſight of God, they endeavour in the firſt place (*as the only thing needful*) to Solemnize the contract between her Conſcience and the Law. Which is according to St. *Pauls* Allegory, but to preſent her an Adultreſs before God, for which ſin, ſeeing ſhe is ſeparated thereby from the true God: ſhe is bound *Rom.* 7.

in captivity under the guilt of ſin, and is in bondage to *Satan* and the wrath of God for evermore.

All people therefore muſt learn from hence to imitate the true Church of God; which is to lay down the true grounds of conſolation for their little Siſter to reſt on in the day of her diſtreſs, that as ſoon as ſhe is ſpoken for and feeleth her condemnation by the Law, and that ſhe hath no breaſts of her own to nouriſh her in her miſery; then to become inſtrumental to marry her to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt by faith alone.

Now that the match may be made, and that ſhe may be wedded to the Son of God, ſhe muſt acknowledg her death by the Law, and aske forgiveneſs for her ſins with a believing heart, then is ſhe free (according to St. *Paul*) from her firſt Husband the Law, being dead unto it through faith in the Son of God. For in that ſhe feeleth and confeſſeth her death by the Law: the Law is alſo become dead, having loſt its power and dominion. Then may we aſſure her, that the compound (*made with man at firſt*) is diſſolved, between the Conſcience and the Law: and may alſo Solemnize the contract between Chriſt and the Soul.

Rom. 7.

This is the duty we muſt all learn, for the helping and comforting of our little Siſter, that ſhe being ſo ſetled in the love of her Redeemer: ſhe may burſt forth into love and all good works amongſt

amongſt men. To teach this point aright, hath hath ſome difficulty in it, as appears by the moan ſhe makes, what ſhall we do for her in that day, which ſheweth, it requireth ſome skill: yet this was her practice and endeavour, as appeareth in the next words.

VERSE IX.

If ſhe be a wall, we will build upon her a Palace of Silver: and if ſhe be a door, we will incloſe her with boards of Cedar.

WHich is as much as to ſay this, *if ſhe be a wall* that ſetleth aright upon the foundation laid in *Sion*, in the day that ſhe is ſpoken for, and doth not turn aſide to another foundation: *we will then build upon her*; that is, upon her principles a Palace for the King to delight himſelf in. Which Palace or Spiritual houſe, cannot perfectly be finiſhed until the full number of the Elect be call'd, until which time the true Church and every particular member thereof, according to his capacity laboureth in building. And it being ſaid to be builded of Silver, it ſheweth the matter that buildeth the Palace, *Heb.* 11.

1 Cor. 3. which is the Doctrine of the Goſpel, which elſewhere is compar'd to Gold, Silver, and precious Stones, being pure and laſting, and things of ineſtimable worth. And further, *if ſhe be a dore*, which is, that openeth to hear and receive the promiſe of Everlaſting life, which is made to all thoſe that are ſpoken for, which feel and confeſs their death by the Law; *we will encloſe her with boards of Cedar*, ſhe ſhall be ſafe in the Kings Palace, where the King is always preſent.

Verse X.

I am a wall, and my breaſts like Towers: then was I in his eyes as one that found Favour.

The little Siſter having heard that Chriſt by the Law beſpeaketh her for himſelf, that ſhe is not ſpoken to to be left under wrath and condemnation, but ſpoken for that ſhe might be delivered from an opinion of righteouſneſs by the Law, and might be married to Chriſt; this being the intent of the Spokeſman, ſhe concludeth, *I am a Wall.* As ſoon as ever ſhe underſtandeth the Office of the Law truly, it worketh in her a ſence of Faith; (and ſo it is with all people;) for it is as much as to ſay, then

then am I ſettled in mind, for as much as the Office of the Law is not to juſtifie, but to bring me to Chriſt, that I might be juſtified by Faith. And ſhe further ſaith, *my Breaſts are like Towers*; the one of my Breaſts deſtroyeth my opinion of righteouſneſs by the Law, the other of my Breaſts giveth me Life everlaſting without the Law. Theſe ſhe ſaith are as Towers or Caſtles of Defence, which are built to preſerve the City from the Enemy. He that liveth in both theſe Towers, is ſafe from the malice of Satan, and wrath of God. This knowledge of Chriſt breaketh the head of Satan, and utterly aboliſheth his Kingdom, therefore ſhe addeth, *then was I in his Eyes as one that found favour*; then, and not till then. The knowledge of the Goſpel giveth us a certain evidence, that we are in God's favour. Mark this then well, that thou attaineſt not his favour by the Works of the Law, but only by Faith in Chriſt without the Law; which Faith condemneth thee by the Law, and ſo deſtroyeth thine opinion of the Law, and giveth thee an aſſurance, that Chriſt is given moſt freely where that opinion is deſtroyed.

Learn thou then to believe, that Chriſt is given to thee, becauſe, becauſe thou feeleſt and confeſſeſt thy juſt condemnation by the Law: Then ſhalt thou alſo become a *Wall*, and thy *Breaſts* like *Towers*. They that require nothing but Works in building the Wall, do *daub but with untempered morter*, which ſhall be broken *Ezek.* 13. 10. *Ezek.* 13. 14, 15.

broken down, and they that daubed it. Learn thou then with *Paul*, *even through the Law to become dead to the Law*, that thou maist *live unto God* without the Law, then shalt thou be *in his Eyes*, *as one that findeth favour.*

Verse XI.

Solomon had a Vineyard at Baal-hammon, he let out the Vineyard unto keepers: every one for the fruit thereof, was to bring a thousand pieces of Silver.

CHrist in these words compares his own Vineyard, the Church, with the Vineyard of *Solomon* at *Baalhamon*, which formerly was his Father *David*'s; who appointed Officers to look to his Vineyard, and to manure it, and to pay him an yearly Tribute for the same, and to retain part of the profit themselves. Now the Vineyard of our King *Solomon* is the House of *Israel*, the universal Church of *Jews* and *Gentiles*; and *Baalhamon* (which signifies the Owner of a multitude) sheweth the place where this Vineyard is planted, even amongst the multitudes of this World. He lets out his Vineyard also to Keepers, that is according to the Parable to *Husbandmen*, to manure it and dress it; and the reason rendered in the Parable

1 *Chro.* 24.

Isa. 5.

Mat. 21. 34.

is,

is, that *they* (meaning the Husbandmen, as well as himſelf) *might receive the Fruits of the Vineyard*, which is *Life everlaſting*; and alſo to yield unto himſelf a continual Tribute, which is to render everlaſting thanks and praiſes unto God, for his infinite mercies and loving kindneſs to us, and to ſerve him with joyfulneſs all the days of our Lives, which is ſaid here to be *a thouſand pieces of ſilver*. And this is all that is expected from us by our Lord King *Solomon*. Now he ſheweth in the next Words, there is great reaſon we ſhould return him thanks and praiſe, for he ſays,

VERSE XII.

My Vineyard which is mine, is before me; ——

I Set mine Eyes upon it continually, and my care is always for it, and although I ſometimes hide mine Eyes from it (ſeemingly for a time) yet I keep it night and day leſt any hurt it. In anſwer to this, follows next the words of the Spouſe;

—— *Thou (O Solomon) muſt have a Thouſand,* ——

Which

Which is an indefinite Speech, meaning, To thee, O *Solomon*, be all praiſe and thanks for evermore, for it is thy due; for thou art worthy to receive all glory, honour, and praiſe, for ever and ever. Where ſhe attributeth to Chriſt all that he requireth of her, which is to ſing everlaſting praiſes to the honour of his name. Next follows the laſt words of the Bridegroom in this Song:

——*And they that keep the fruit thereof two Hundred.*

By which he meaneth alſo praiſes, which ſheweth, he is ſo far from begrudging any one the Fruits of his Death and Reſurrection, that whoſoever is but willing to receive the ſame, ſhall have honour and praiſe for ſo doing; for *they that keep the Fruit thereof muſt have two hundred*, that is, they ſhall be crowned with everlaſting praiſe and honour at the appearing of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

This is a moſt wonderful comfort to all poor wretches, that almoſt all their Lives long are are oppreſſed with ſins, ſorrows, cares, croſſes and calamities, which through manifold temptation, are continually in heavineſs of heart: who if they are but willing to receive the fruits of the Vineyard, they ſhall have two hundred. They ſhall have honour and praiſe and glory at

at the appearing of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Next follow the words of the ſpouſe which cloſe up the whole *Song*.

VERSE XIII, & XIIII.

Thou that dwelleſt in the Gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice: cauſe me to hear it.

Make haſte, my beloved, and be thou like to a Roe, or a young Hart upon the Mountains of Spices.

WHich words are a Prayer, wherein the Church calleth upon *her beloved*, not as the high and lofty one that doth inhabit Eternity: but ſhe looketh upon him as one whoſe dwelling is in *Sion*, and whoſe delight is with the Sons of Men. *O thou that dwelleſt in the Gardens!* that are conſtant and reſident with thy poor afflicted people. *Thy companions hearken to thy voice*, meaning thoſe that are in Church fellowſhip, they hearken, but they do not underſtand. *cauſe me to hear it*, meaning the whole company of the Elect, who muſt all be united through faith into one body and ſpiritual communion. *Make haſte my beloved*, my earneſt deſire is that this thing be ſpeedily accompliſhed: *that even*

as

as the Roe or young hart doth ſpeedily skip over the Mountains where ſpices grow, So do thou ſpeedily deſtroy all thoſe Mountains in man that produce fruitleſneſs and barrenneſs, that the ſpices of the Goſpel may enter into the hearts of all thine Elect: that the guilt of ſin may be removed, the reign of ſin ſubdued, that all afflictions may be ſanctified, and the whole univerſal Church may be armed and fortified againſt all the aſſaults of *Satan* in this life, and may receive Eternal glory in the life to come.

FINIS.